25¢
Adventure
POPULAR PUBLICATIONS
JAN.
AMERICA'S MOST EXCITING FICTION FOR MEN!
TO BARBARY OR TO HELL by JULES ARCHER

deafness

Nearly Cost Me MY JOB!

... until I discovered this New Electronic Way to Hear!

Nothing can ruin a man's business chances more surely than loss of hearing. People get the idea that you are growing stupid, slow-witted and old —ready for "the shelf."

But I stubbornly fought the idea of wearing a hearing aid. I rebelled against that unsightly "button in the ear"—against dangling battery wires and clumsy battery packs.

Then a little book fell into my hands and changed my whole life overnight. The book told how the new Beltone Phantomold actually *hides* deafness—how a tiny, one-unit Beltone recaptures hearing a totally *different* way thru the miracle of modern electronics. And NO BUTTON IN THE EAR!

Today I can hear clearly again—even faintest whispers. No more office-mistakes and misunderstandings because I "couldn't hear." Thanks to the new Beltone, I can again hold my own with *anyone*—in business or anywhere else!

If you are hard-of-hearing, don't resign yourself to the handicaps that deafness brings. Send for the valuable FREE book on what Beltone is doing for the deaf! No cost, no obligation. Do it now!

ACCEPTED COUNCIL ON PHYSICAL MEDICINE AMERICAN MEDICAL ASSOCIATION

Beltone

ONE-UNIT HEARING AID

Beltone Hearing Aid Co., Dept. PFG-1

1450 W. 19th St., Chicago 8, Ill.

Mail For Free Book on *DEAFNESS!*

Beltone Hearing Aid Co., Dept. PFG-1
1450 W. 19th St., Chicago 8, Ill.

Please send me (in plain wrapper) FREE booklet on OVERCOMING DEAFNESS without a button in the ear.

Name.....

Address.....

Town.....State.....

AND THEN THE BENTON GANG MET ITS MATCH...

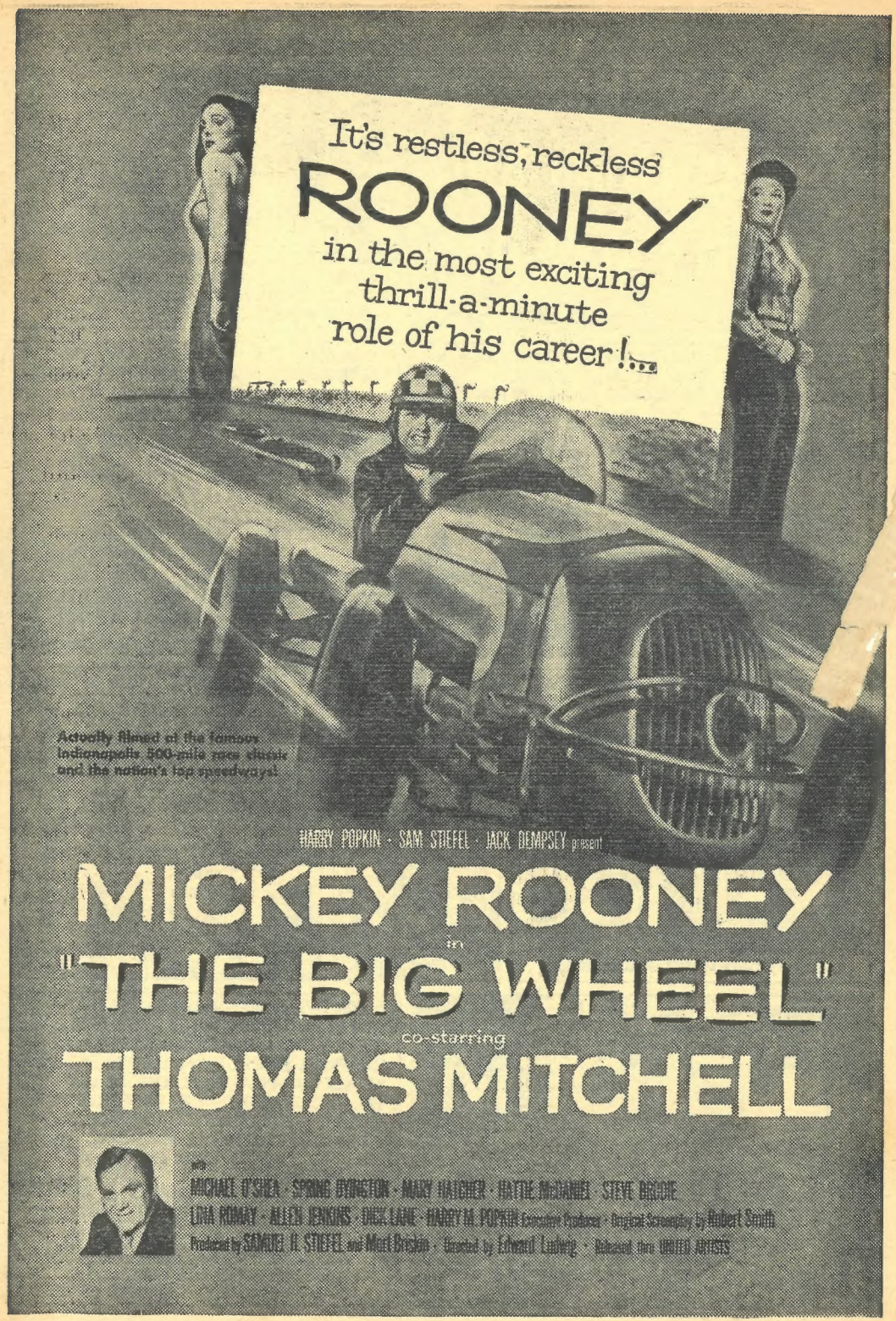
SWOOPING DOWN ON THE SLEEPY, LITTLE TOWN OF FERNVILLE, THE NOTORIOUS "BENTON GANG" STARTS TO RAID THE LOCAL BANK

HOPE YOU LIKE PUBLICITY, CLARK. THERE'S ABOUT TWENTY REPORTERS AND PHOTOGRAPHERS OUTSIDE
AND I'VE NEVER LOOKED MORE LIKE A BUM! CAN I CLEAN UP HERE?

LATER, AT STATE POLICE HEADQUARTERS

FOR FAST, GOOD-LOOKING SHAVES THAT GIVE YOU A LIFT, **USE THIN GILLETTES.** YOU'LL SEE WHY THEY ARE AMERICA'S MOST POPULAR LOW-PRICED BLADES. THIN GILLETTES ARE KEENER THAN ORDINARY BLADES AND LAST FAR LONGER. ALSO, THEY FIT YOUR GILLETTE RAZOR TO A "T" AND PROTECT YOUR FACE. TRY **THIN GILLETTES** IN THE CONVENIENT, 10-BLADE PACK!

NEW TEN-BLADE PACKAGE HAS COMPARTMENT FOR USED BLADES


It's restless, reckless
ROONEY
in the most exciting thrill-a-minute role of his career!
Actually filmed at the famous Indianapolis 500-mile race classic and the nation's top speedways!
HARRY POPKIN · SAM STIEFEL · JACK DEMPSEY present
MICKEY ROONEY
in
"THE BIG WHEEL"
co-starring
THOMAS MITCHELL
with
MICHAEL O'SHEA · SPRING BYINGTON · MARY HATCHER · HATTIE McDANIEL · STEVE BRODIE
LIMA DUMAY · ALLEN JENKINS · DICK LANE · HARRY M. POPKIN Executive Producer · Original Screenplay by Robert Smith
Produced by SAMUEL H. STIEFEL and Mort Briskin · Directed by Edward Ludwig · Released thru UNITED ARTISTS

FEBRUARY ISSUE ON SALE JANUARY 11th

Adventure

(Registered U. S. Patent Office)

January, 1950 Vol. 122, No. 3

CONTENTS

TO BARBARY OR TO HELL *(A Novelette)*.....Jules Archer 8
An historical narrative of the ill-fated voyage of the Batavia to the Indies in 1629, and the bloody mutiny that followed her shipwreck.

SNOW BLIND.....Hal G. Evarts 44
They had almost reached the summit of Karkori when Danby fell to his death . . . Murder or accident? Passang, the guide, had only a stub of rope as a clue.

LAST ASSEMBLY *(Verse)*.....Edward Arthur Dolph 53
"Into the gathering twilight of History, gallop the cavalrymen of the border . . ."

CHARLEY HOE HANDLE GETS CAUGHT.....Jim Kjelgaard 54
Looks like Warden Horse Jenkins has Charley up a tree at last, and out on a shaky limb at that.

"HARD HEAD" DRILLER.....James Norman 58
O'Connor was born on a derrick floor, cradled on a walking beam, and nursed by mud pumps.

THE POSTWAR PLAN OF JASON KORVENE.....John Keasler 68
The little ex-GI had returned to the forgotten Pacific isle to reap the rewards of his war-time stratagem.

THE THREE LEFT LEGS *(A Novelette)*.....Robert F. Germann 72
On that chill and blustery evening, a strange fate brought three strangers together in the taproom of the Admiral Kilpatrick Tavern.

WRONG LEAD.....John Richard Young 91
Abel Dodd knew the escaped killer would never get out of the mountains alive—not even on Dodd's best horse.

INVINCIBLE ARMADA *(A Fact Story)*.....Arthur S. Riggs 94
Hell in the armed Spanish galleys of the 16th Century.

A BANQUET FOR THE BWANA.....Walt Sheldon 98
When the cannibal chief graciously invited Etienne Alphonse Latrouse to dinner, the little Frenchman was pardonably disturbed. Was he to be honored guest—or main course?

CANNONADE OFF SALEM.....Llewellyn Hughes 104
The story of John Quilt, master of the privateer Amanda, gallant patriot in the War of Independence, and a man with but one limitation—he was incapable of surrender.

LOST TRAILS.....Where old paths cross 6
THE CAMP-FIRE.....Where readers, writers and adventurers meet 113
THE TRAIL AHEAD.....News of next month's issue 116
ASK ADVENTURE.....Information you can't get elsewhere 117
ASK ADVENTURE EXPERTS.....The men who furnish it 119

Cover painted for Adventure by Peter Stevens
Kendall W. Goodwyn, Editor

Any resemblance between any character appearing in fictional matter, and any person living or dead, is entirely coincidental and unintentional.

Published monthly by Popular Publications, Inc., at 1125 E. Vaile Ave., Kokomo, Indiana. Editorial and Executive Offices, 205 East 42nd Street, New York 17, N. Y. Henry Steeger, President and Secretary, Harold S. Goldsmith, Vice-President and Treasurer. Entered as second-class matter at the Post Office at Kokomo, Indiana. Copyright, 1949, by Popular Publications, Inc. This issue is published simultaneously in the Dominion of Canada. Copyright under International Copyright Convention and Pan-American Copyright Conventions. All rights reserved, including the right of reproduction, in whole or in part, in any form. Title registered in U. S. and Canadian Patent Offices. Single copy 25 cents. Annual subscription for U. S. A., its possessions and Canada, $2.50; other countries, 75c additional. All correspondence relating to this publication should be addressed to 1125 E. Vaile Ave., Kokomo, Indiana, or 205 E. 42nd Street, New York 17, N. Y. When submitting manuscripts, enclose stamped, self-addressed envelope for their return, if found unavailable. The publishers will exercise care in the handling of unsolicited manuscripts, but assume no responsibility for their return. Printed in the U.S.A.

To People who want to write

but can't get started

Do you have that constant urge to write but fear that a beginner hasn't a chance? Then listen to what the former editor of *Liberty* said on this subject:

"There is more room for newcomers in the writing field today than ever before. Some of the greatest of writing men and women have passed from the scene in recent years. Who will take their places? Who will be the new Robert W. Chambers, Edgar Wallace, Rudyard Kipling? Fame, riches and the happiness of achievement await the new men and women of power."

Becomes Sports Editor After Only 5 Months Training

"I am now Sports Editor of our local daily newspaper. I started at $150 a month salary to increase $25 every six months until I am making $225 a month. This, with only five months of the course. Who knows where I will be by the time I finish N.I.A. training?"—Harold R. Zimmer, Fullerton, California.

Writing Aptitude Test—FREE!

THE Newspaper Institute of America offers a free Writing Aptitude Test. Its object is to discover new recruits for the army of men and women who add to their income by fiction and article writing. The Writing Aptitude Test is a simple but expert analysis of your latent ability, your powers of imagination, logic, etc. Not all applicants pass this test. Those who do are qualified to take the famous N.I.A. course based on the *practical* training given by big metropolitan dailies.

This is the New York Copy Desk Method which teaches you to write by writing. You develop your *individual* style instead of trying to copy that of others. Although you work at home, on your own time, you are constantly guided by experienced writers. It is really fascinating work. You "cover" actual assignments such as metropolitan reporters get. Each week you see new progress. In a matter of months you can acquire the coveted "professional" touch. Then you're ready for market with greatly improved chances of making sales.

Mail the Coupon Now

But the first step is to take the Writing Aptitude Test. It requires but a few minutes and costs nothing. So mail the coupon now. Make the first move towards the most enjoyable and profitable occupation — writing for publication! Newspaper Institute of America, One Park Avenue, New York 16, N. Y. (Founded 1925.)

VETERANS: This Course Approved for Veterans' Training

Free

Newspaper Institute of America
One Park Ave., New York 16, N. Y.

Send me, without cost or obligation, your Writing Aptitude Test and further information about writing for profit.

Mr. }
Mrs. } .....
Miss }

Address .....

( ) Check here if you are eligible under the G.I. Bill of Rights.
All correspondence confidential. No salesman will call on you. 64-A-680

Copyright 1949, Newspaper Institute of America.

LOST TRAILS

NOTE: We offer this department to readers who wish to get in touch again with friends or acquaintances separated by years or chance. Give your own name and full address. Please notify *Adventure* immediately should you establish contact with the person you are seeking. Space permitting, each inquiry addressed to *Lost Trails* will be run in three consecutive issues. Requests by and concerning women are declined as not considered effective in a magazine published for men. *Adventure* also will decline any notice that may not seem a sincere effort to recover an old friendship, or that may not seem suitable to the editors for any other reason. No charge is made for publication of notices.

Veterans who served at Dutch Harbor are planning a reunion in Chicago in 1950. We are eager to hear from Naval and Marine personnel who served at N.O.B., N.A.S., and N.A.F. from 1941 to the fall of 1945. I am particularly anxious to contact Don Wayne Henry (Ship's Service) for his address list. Please communicate with J. Matthews, 5321 North Ashland, Chicago 40, Illinois.

Would appreciate hearing from anyone knowing the whereabouts of Walter Coppinger, stationed in Panama around the time of the first World War. He was discharged from the Army at Fort Benning, Ga. Please notify James Corrigan, 1225 Bloomfield St., Hoboken, N. J.

Sister and nephew of Melvin P. Verschneider would like to hear from anyone knowing his present address. He has not been heard from in five years. He is 53 years old, an expert auto mechanic and his last known address was 21 Evergreen St., Cortland, N. Y. Send information to nephew, Harry Farrar, c/o D. Pitale, 32 So. Conn. Ave., Atlantic City, N. J.

Would like information concerning whereabouts of Floyd (Bud) Riggs. Ex-sailor and race car jockey. Lived at Wilmar and Los Angeles, California. We were shipmates on USS *Leonis* in South Pacific '43 and '44. Maybe shipping Merchant Marine or tending bar around California coast. Send any information to Richard Powell, Cpl., USA, Alaskan Communication System, Box 219, Anchorage, Alaska.

Would like information of Army buddies' whereabouts: John Kowal, Hamtramck, Mich.; Harry Gottfried, Chicago; John Tyson, N. Y. C. All of the 31st MRU (ETO) last seen in Chantilly. Also Emil de Roseby, 29th Inf. Div., last seen near Frankfurt A/M. Write to John F. Laughlin, 4719 N. Cicero Ave., Chicago 30, Ill.

The g.I's have it!

Good news for Veterans! I. C. S. Courses—all 400 of them—are now available under the G.I. Bill of Rights.

Here's your chance to learn while you earn : : : to master a trade or profession and qualify for promotions and pay raises *on the job.*

The coupon brings full details of the course you check—and complete instructions on how to enroll. Mail it today!

INTERNATIONAL CORRESPONDENCE SCHOOLS

APPROVED under the G.I. BILL

BOX 3276-C, SCRANTON 9, PENNA.

Without cost or obligation, please send me full particulars about the course BEFORE which I have marked X:

Air Conditioning and Plumbing Courses
- ☐ Air Conditioning
- ☐ Heating ☐ Plumbing
- ☐ Refrigeration ☐ Steam Fitting

Chemical Courses
- ☐ Chemical Engineering
- ☐ Chemistry, Analytical
- ☐ Chemistry, Industrial
- ☐ Chemistry, Mfg. Iron & Steel
- ☐ Petroleum Refining ☐ Plastics
- ☐ Pulp and Paper Making

Civil Engineering, Architectural and Mining Courses
- ☐ Architecture
- ☐ Architectural Drafting
- ☐ Bridge and Building Foreman
- ☐ Building Estimating
- ☐ Civil Engineering
- ☐ Coal Mining
- ☐ Contracting and Building
- ☐ Highway Engineering
- ☐ Lumber Dealer
- ☐ Reading Structural Blueprints
- ☐ Sanitary Engineering
- ☐ Structural Drafting
- ☐ Structural Engineering
- ☐ Surveying and Mapping

Communications Courses
- ☐ Electronics
- ☐ Practical Telephony
- ☐ Radio, General ☐ Radio Operating
- ☐ Radio Servicing ☐ Television
- ☐ Telegraph Engineering

Electrical Courses
- ☐ Electrical Drafting
- ☐ Electrical Engineering
- ☐ Electric Light and Power
- ☐ Lighting Technician
- ☐ Practical Electrician

Internal Combustion Engines Courses
- ☐ Auto Technician ☐ Aviation
- ☐ Diesel-Electric
- ☐ Diesel Engines ☐ Gas Engines

Mechanical Courses
- ☐ Aeronautical Engineer's, Jr.
- ☐ Aircraft Drafting ☐ Flight Engineer
- ☐ Forging ☐ Foundry Work
- ☐ Heat Treatment of Metals
- ☐ Industrial Engineering
- ☐ Industrial Instrumentation
- ☐ Industrial Metallurgy
- ☐ Machine Shop ☐ Mech. Drafting
- ☐ Mechanical Engineering
- ☐ Mold-Loft Work
- ☐ Patternmaking—Wood, Metal
- ☐ Reading Shop Blueprints
- ☐ Sheet-Metal Drafting
- ☐ Sheet-Metal Worker
- ☐ Ship Drafting ☐ Ship Fitting
- ☐ Tool Designing ☐ Toolmaking
- ☐ Welding Engineering
- ☐ Welding—Gas and Electric

Railroad Courses
- ☐ Air Brake ☐ Car Inspector
- ☐ Diesel Locomotive
- ☐ Locomotive Engineer
- ☐ Locomotive Fireman
- ☐ Locomotive Machinist
- ☐ Railroad Section Foreman
- ☐ Steam-Diesel Loco. Eng.

Stationary Eng'r's Courses
- ☐ Boilermaking
- ☐ Combustion Engineering
- ☐ Engine Running
- ☐ Marine Engineering
- ☐ Power Plant Eng'r'g ☐ Steam Engr.

Textile Courses
- ☐ Cotton Manufacturing
- ☐ Loom Fixing ☐ Rayon Weaving
- ☐ Textile Designing
- ☐ Woolen Manufacturing

Business and Academic Courses
- ☐ Accounting ☐ Advertising
- ☐ App. Psychology ☐ Bookkeeping
- ☐ Business Administration
- ☐ Bus. Correspondence ☐ Bus. Law
- ☐ Certified Public Accounting
- ☐ Commercial ☐ Commercial Art
- ☐ Cost Accounting
- ☐ Federal Tax ☐ First Year College
- ☐ Foremanship ☐ French
- ☐ Good English ☐ High School
- ☐ Higher Mathematics ☐ Illustration
- ☐ Industrial Supervision
- ☐ Motor Traffic ☐ Postal Civil Service
- ☐ Retailing ☐ Retail Bus. Management
- ☐ Salesmanship ☐ Secretarial
- ☐ Sign Lettering
- ☐ Spanish ☐ Stenography
- ☐ Traffic Management

Name_____ Age_____ Home Address_____

City_____ State_____ Working Hours_____ A.M. to_____ P.M.

Present Position_____ Employed by_____

Length of Service in World War II_____

Enrollment under G.I. Bill approved for World War II Veterans. Special tuition rates to members of the Armed Forces.
Canadian residents send coupon to International Correspondence Schools Canadian, Ltd., Montreal, Canada.

ILLUSTRATED BY
CHARLES GEER

TO BARBARY

An historical novelette based on the true incident of Captain Francis Pelsart's shipwreck off the coast of Australia in the year 1629

OR TO HELL

By JULES ARCHER

THE storm was still blowing. Two days now, and still no sign of the missing ships. There was general uneasiness aboard the *Batavia,* flagship of the three Indiamen which had sailed out of Holland on the twenty-eighth of October, 1628.

The General East India Company had commissioned Merchant-Captain Francis Pelsart of Antwerp, a quiet bulldog of a man, to find and colonize the new South Continent reported to lie beneath the Indies. After the colonists had been unloaded, he was further charged to sail on to the Court of Batavia to deliver chests of silver and costly materials, the coin of

Unexpectedly, Tewis Jans, the carpenter, stood up. "As you know," he quavered, "I am of one heart and soul with all of you. But, sir, is it necessary to our enterprise that innocent Dutch be murdered while they sleep?"

Dutch bribery for princes of the Spice Islands.

But after seven scurvy-ridden months at sea, the convoy had been struck by a fierce storm in the Indian Ocean. The *Batavia's* sister ships had disappeared. Now she was alone, pitching severely on wind-lashed waves. Her foresails were furled, and topsails double-reefed on main and mizzen masts. The rain had stopped, but the world around the full-rigger was still a hostile black.

The officer of the watch studied the night with wary eyes. Anything might happen now. A collision with one of the lost ships. A pirate brig or Spanish galleon. A dangerous shoal . . . God alone knew where they were. The lack of sun for fully three days had made it impossible to take bearings by cross-staff.

With Captain Pelsart sick in his cabin, the second mate had no stomach for such heavy responsibilities. He was a man who knew how to handle ships better than men. At this moment he had an immense longing to handle nothing more than a tankard in a Munsterberg taproom. It was bad enough that the Batavia heeled blindly and helplessly through the dark seas. But worse, the whispering below deck had grown louder, almost openly defiant . . .

The second mate had voiced his suspicions privately to Jerome Cornelis, the supercargo, next in command to Captain Pelsart. "It's not just talk, sir," he had assured Cornelis. "They have plans. And someone high up is with them, too!"

"Mutiny and then piracy, is it?" The supercargo had smiled dryly, smoothing back the long black hair that made his sharp features seem pale. "Sailors' vapors, mate, nothing more. What would you have them talk about, after almost a year of salt pork, hardtack and peas pudding? I warrant they slit our throats ten times a watch . . . in their dreams."

Now Cornelis sat alone in the officers' quarters, a long churchwarden clay pipe tucked between his thin, tight lips. A hard smile pressed at the corners of his mouth. "Someone high up is with them, too!" Someone with more imagination and daring than the petty sea hirelings of the fat-bellied louts who wore out carved chairs in the Company's offices at Amsterdam . . .

A hunchbacked cabin boy knocked and entered to tell him that the boatswain wished to speak to him about some damage the storm had done to the rigging. Cornelis nodded, and the hunchback admitted Wooter Loos, a lean, elderly sailor with a deep scar traversing his leathery neck. Loos waited until the cabin boy left.

"Sir," he said dourly, his eyes shifting from corner to corner, "the bowspritsails are beaten to shreds, but we can't—"

"You can talk," Cornelis said curtly. "We're alone."

The boatswain's hollow cheeks relaxed in a grim smile. His eyes gleamed above their dark shadows. "Four more," he whispered hoarsely. "We've got all but eleven now. Eleven frightened rats who'll do us more good on their side. Well, Cornelis?"

"I told you to be patient," the supercargo said sharply, pointing the stem of his pipe at Wooter Loos. "Fools quickly kick their heels in the air from a yardarm. The time will be as I have planned—when we land, and the ship's troops are sent ashore."

"Ship's troops!" The boatswain's narrow lips curled. "We are already forty strong against Webbye Hays and his fifteen ensigns. As for Thomas de Villier and his nine mercenaries, you well know they will not risk their lavendered necks in a bloody quarrel betwixt Dutch and Dutch!"

Jerome Cornelis rose, gaunt and erect. "If you recognize me as your Captain-General, you will not question my orders. Respect a superior intelligence where you find it, my friend. If you had not tumbled into a ship, you would have dropped from the gallows long ago. Now get below and put all to work winning over the reluctant eleven. Reluctant or eager, they still have knives!"

WEBBYE HAYS, marine corporal in charge of the *Batavia's* soldiers, watched sailors scramble precariously over the yards. The second mate had sighted a welcome clearance over larboard bow and ordered full rigging.

The wind blew stiffly from the southeast, bellying out the main-course and

fore-course. Now it snapped impatiently at the top-sails as these were spread. The *Batavia* began to tear faster through the dark waters, as though eager to reach the distant stars which shone briefly, dived beneath the forecastle deck, and then reappeared. Noisy waves flew over her bows and taffrail.

Hays' dark brown eyes stared at the activity without seeing it. He was about 29, not unattractive, but a rocky chin and solemn mouth gave him a stern aspect. Gnawing at his mind was the hoarse voice of Wooter Loos, the boatswain, asking casually, "Corporal, if you found most of the crew—and some of the soldiers—ready to seize the *Batavia* and turn pirate, which side would you join?"

"That's an odd question, Loos," Hays had said slowly. "Are you asking out of idle curiosity—or a purpose?"

"Curiosity, of course," the boatswain had grinned crookedly. "I've often wondered how much loyalty the Company buys for a corporal's fifteen guilder a month."

"I have no high regard for the Directors or the Company," Webbye Hays had replied guardedly. "But I respect Captain Pelsart, and also my sworn duty as a soldier. I would never permit—as long as I have my sword and my breath—an innocent woman, man or child to be murdered by mutineers. Does that satisfy your curiosity, *mynheer?*"

"It does," Loos had nodded tersely. "It does."

Now Webbye Hays made his way slowly to the half-deck. As he passed, a seaman jumped from the shrouds at his right, landing on the deck directly behind him. Hays turned quickly. His hand automatically dropped to the hilt of his sword.

It was the giant sailor, Jan de Breuer, naked from the waist up, gleaming in the moonlight from his work on the wet sails overhead. His thick, broken nose spread in a gaping grin. Then he turned and lumbered off, flexing his muscular arms as he went.

A warning, Webbye Hays thought grimly.

He wondered whether to voice his suspicions to the supercargo. Perhaps if Wooter Loos were put to the lash, the entire plot might be whipped out of him. But the seizure of Loos might precipitate the uprising, if one really were planned. It was bad catching hares with drums. In any event, Hays had been to sea long enough to know that his own life, as an informant, would be forfeit on the first dark night. That was fools' courage, not the true bravery of a soldier fighting odds face to face.

Troubled, he felt the need of alerting his aide-de-camp, Thomas de Villier, leader of the mercenaries attached to the Dutch ensigns. His dark brown eyes sought among the shadowed figures on deck for the gayly-plumed headgear of the Frenchman. Then his square, serious face turned copper, and his fingers tightened.

Standing with de Villier at the lee rail—too close for Christian comfort—was Judith Bastians, daughter of the preacher. The Frenchman's finely-turned mustache and trim beard were at the level of her ear. Webbye Hays could hear her soft, delighted murmurs of amusement.

He hesitated. The girl affected him strangely. He feared the mocking way she spoke to him, as though enjoying some private jest at his expense. Yet whenever she was near, his eyes were irresistibly drawn toward her. She had full red cheeks, full red lips, irregular but white teeth, and a tilted little nose.

Webbye Hays stiffened whenever he spoke to her. For all his hard manner, he was a shy man who felt uneasy away from swords and soldiers. In Amsterdam, while his men caroused, he would spend all his time in the *Shutterhofs* and *Doelens,* improving his swordplay. None of his men dared jest about it . . . to his face.

Now he made his mind up and approached them resolutely. He felt awkward and suddenly conscious of the difference in his sober dress and the brilliant figure cut by de Villier. His own cloak and hat were black, rather than colored, reflecting his dislike of pretensions of any kind. He wore an equally simple leather doublet, over which fell the soldier's *welsche* collar, with tassel cords to tie it.

He nodded briefly at de Villier, then at Judith Bastians.

The girl cocked her chestnut roll of hair to one side.

"Here's just the man to settle the ques-

tion, Thomas," she murmured drolly. "Corporal Hays, speak truthfully—you think I'm a shamefully flirtatious trollop, don't you?"

The ensign's cheeks caught fire. "I presume to no opinions," he said curtly, "except those which pertain to my duties as a soldier."

Thomas de Villier shrewdly understood the Dutchman's shyness, but could not help observing, "One of the duties of a soldier, Corporal, is gallantry, *n'est-ce pas?*"

"Of the sword, de Villier—not of the tongue!"

Judith Bastians lifted her oval-shaped young face. The smile she wore was forced as she said, "Monsieur de Villier may be your inferior in rank, Corporal, but he most decidedly is not in simple courtesy. If you will excuse me."

Lifting her petticoat, she stepped away from the rail. Then she left them, cap held high, her hair concealed by a tall, starched linen collar. De Villier stared after her in amused admiration, his glance trailing her at capstan level.

"I rather suspect," he murmured, "that with a civil tongue in your head, Corporal, you could gain a wife here in the waters of New Holland, ere we sail again for home."

Hays flushed and regarded his deerskin gaiters. "I am not a man who can endear himself with elaborate phrases, as you can," he said shortly. "Nor do I care to. But I warn you, de Villier, that I seriously regard my responsibilities for the safety of cargo and passengers."

"That is an awkward way of saying what you mean, *monsieur.*" The Frenchman's tone was light and thinly veiled. "Do you imply that my attentions to the preacher's daughter constitute a menace to her safety . . . to employ your genteel term?"

"I mean that she is a decent girl whose head can be turned by extravagant compliments and artificial manners. You may work your magic ashore, de Villier, but not on this ship where I am responsible for order. Do I make myself clear?"

"And if I were interested in asking the lady to be my wife?"

Webbye Hays' lips parted. "Are you?" he asked hesitantly.

De Villier laughed. "I rather think you exceed your authority, Corporal. However, as I am under your command while on board—" He bowed gracefully, if mockingly, from the waist. "But as a swordsman of some repute in France, I should look forward to an opportunity to dispute the matter with you, if you would be willing to lay aside your doublet when we go ashore."

"By all means," Webbye Hays said shortly. "If we ever do."

"If?" De Villier's eyebrows arched. "Are we so badly lost?"

"Something more serious. I suspect a plot among the seamen—and some soldiers—to seize this vessel and turn it into a corsair." He regarded the Frenchman a moment, then asked bluntly, "Would you have noticed anything suspicious in the conduct of any of your men?"

De Villier whistled softly in wonder. Then the implication of the Dutchman's question sank in. "Because we are mercenaries, *monsieur,*" he bridled testily, "it does not follow that we are without allegiance to our employers. This is a second affront for which I will eagerly ask your rapier to answer!"

Webbye Hays shrugged and turned away.

CHAPTER II

DRAWN SWORDS

JEROME CORNELIS sat beside Captain Pelsart's empty chair in the dining cabin forward. He allowed himself to be served another helping of *poffertjes* and *wafelen.* His black eyes rested lightly on the lady who sat at his left, not quite by accident. Language had been superfluous between them, all during the voyage. Without an untoward word, each knew what the other thought.

Vrouw Lucretia de Jonge was a creature of compelling beauty. She had lustrous black hair combed carefully back, fair skin and high cheekbones. The lace-trimmed linen collar of her red satin underdress was cut low. What it revealed captured more eyes in the dining cabin than the pearl necklace that fell over it.

She and her husband, Luycas de Jonge,

were going to the new Austral land as colonists. Not ordinary colonists, he had let it be carefully understood. A patrician of Basel, he had suffered some reverses in the wild tulip speculation. But he planned to retrieve his fortunes with a spice plantation in New Holland.

The supercargo, formerly an apothecary and therefore a man of some education and wit, easily understood the nature of the marriage between so striking a woman and the enormously fat man with a cherubic voice and face. *Vrouw* de Jonge's rings with costly emeralds and rubies were self-eloquent. And she flourished scented, embroidered gloves—her badge of "non-activity."

Lucretia de Jonge had a very definite place in Jerome Cornelis' scheme of things to come. It did not trouble him in the slightest that he already had a wife in Haarlem. It his dreams were fructified, he would never see that tedious woman again.

It would not be difficult, he mused, to persuade the fascinating woman at his left to his purposes. When he did, he would tear every shred of de Jonge finery off her magnificent body. With his own hands he would adorn her with the wealth of nations . . . stripped by Captain-General Cornelis from the ships of every great power. Their love would be a legend of the sea, a toast of pirates.

And they would build a white castle in Barbary. . . .

"But who is to challenge the Netherlands now, eh?" Luycas de Jonge's absurd little voice ripped into his thoughts shrilly. "We have crushed Spain, who desires a peace we will not give her. England fears us, and France can be trusted to respect our independence even if she pretends not to recognize it—"

"We could always buy her recognition," Cornelis observed casually, to show that he had been listening. "There is little that belongs to France which is not for sale. As witness the mercenaries who supplement our own troops. True Frenchmen, risking their lives out of French patriotism—to the guilder."

De Jonge tittered, stroking the poodle that merged with his ample lap. He took a fourth helping of *poffertjes,* smacking his lips. His wife, Cornelis was quick to notice, turned her face away in distaste.

"Just so, just so, my dear Cornelis," the patrician giggled. "We are already called waggoners of the sea. Soon even the French will be compelled to call us masters of the world."

"My congratulations," said a mildly ironical voice at the table. It belonged to the preacher, Isbrant Bastians, a short, bald-headed man. "Spoken with true Christian humility."

De Jonge flushed and looked uncomfortable. "I do not presume to advise you in matters of the Holy Book, *Mynheer* Bastians," he snapped. "I therefore suggest that you leave the judgment of worldly matters to those more capable!"

"I do," the preacher said. "When I find them."

Mortified, the patrician turned to Cornelis, pitching his whining voice to its highest level. "Curious, how often men of the lower classes, incapable of commanding respect in their own households, try to pose as men of authority in strange company!"

Preacher Bastians was instantly on his feet. "Be more distinct, sir," he said evenly. "Do you by chance refer to my daughter Judith, known to all at this table?"

"Since you insist," de Jonge said blandly, "I do."

He felt quite secure in the knowledge that a man of the cloth could not injure him physically or with arms. He went on boldly, "It is clear that she should be here dining with you. But she is not—as she often is not. I rather think you can find her with one French soldier or another in some dark corner on deck—"

He smirked into a lace handkerchief.

Jerome Cornelis, behind a bland mask of mild interest, was secretly enjoying the comedy. He was glad of the public dissention between the two men. Should his plans stumble, it might still be possible to provide the fascinating Lucretia de Jonge with the gift of widowhood, and fasten the blame on Isbrant Bastians.

The scallop-cuffed wrist of the preacher moved swiftly. His hand gripped the hilt of his sword, which he wore suspended from a baldric. Scraping back his chair, he moved into the aisle.

"Draw your sword, *mynheer,*" he said

grimly. "There will be more room for us to discuss this question on the half-deck."

De Jonge's flaccid mouth fell open. This was an unexpected development. He blinked, then scoffed to his crimson-cheeked wife, "High trees give more shadow than fruit. All know that a man of God cannot lift his sword in anger. This knave is either a gross fool or an impostor!"

"As a man of God," said Isbrant Bastians in a low voice, "I permit you to name me what you will, and I pity you for it. But as a man of honor, I warn you to withdraw your statement about my daughter Judith, or I will send you to join the Lord's enemy! Speak quickly, *Mynheer* de Jonge!"

The fat man's chins quivered. His face flaming, he said tremulously, "I meant no offense. It was a jest in unfortunate taste, and I withdraw it willingly."

A loud murmur arose among the passengers at the long table, and among those at adjoining tables. Isbrant Bastians thrust back his half-drawn sword. Without another word he resumed his seat and calmly continued eating.

Jerome Cornelis watched the face of Lucretia de Jonge. Even flushed with scorn and shame, it was an exquisite face. Then she turned her lustrous eyes to meet his, and he saw there all that he needed to know.

She rose silently and left the table.

A strange grinding noise outside the dining cabin suddenly caused all heads to lift. Lucretia de Jonge paused in wonder at the door. In another second there was a jolting crash. Plates and silverware clattered to the floor. Lucretia pitched headlong violently against the cabin wall.

Jerome Cornelis, on his feet, was instantly aware that the *Batavia* had stopped moving. He felt the ship tremble beneath him, then lift. There was another jarring crash, and he spilled sideways over his chair.

The floor rose at a high angle, and the cabin was suddenly filled with floundering, screaming passengers.

Heeling precariously to starboard, the Indiaman was agitated as though in the grip of some ferocious sea-monster which was trying to shake it to pieces.

THE door behind the helmsman flew open. Merchant-Captain Francis Pelsart of Antwerp stood braced against it for a moment, his sea-darkened face haggard and dismayed. Then he staggered out on the half-deck, blue coat unbuttoned, ruff disarranged. Steadying himself against the steering wheel, he faced the second mate with furious, bloodshot eyes.

"You fool! You incompetent fool! *Down all sails!*"

"A-a-all ha-a-ands on deck! A-a-all ha-a-ands on deck!"

Captain Pelsart approached the starboard rail and gripped it until his fingers ached. The *Batavia* was surrounded by thick foam, her rudder aground and her keel running against the reef she had driven over. She was pitching wildly in a choppy sea, a sou'westerly tearing at her sails, grinding her against the sharp coral rocks of the ocean.

"Orders, Captain?" The brisk voice belonged to Webbye Hays.

"Aye," Pelsart snapped. "See that all but crew stay below. And send the supercargo to me directly!"

Hays saluted and wheeled. He ran along the deck, shouting for those of his soldiers who were in sight. The decks were already teeming with frightened passengers. Several women were shrieking hysterically.

All were being jostled, and some knocked over, by the haste of the crew in jumping to the shrouds.

Wooter Loos, the boatswain, howled his orders through cupped hands. "Lay aloft there and furl that main royal! Lay out there and furl the jib! Loose the topsails! . . ."

Webbye Hays and his soldiers prodded all but the crew from the decks. By his orders, the ensigns calmed frightened women and children with comforting words. Some passengers fought with the soldiers, panicky over being sent below with the ship beginning to list badly. Sails could not be furled speedily enough to keep the wind from driving the *Batavia* against the reef like some great battering ram.

Each grinding crash found a dismal echo in the heart of Francis Pelsart, who loved ships as he loved no mortal person.

He was relieved to see Jerome Cornelis at last.

"I have seen to the Company's chests, sir," the supercargo reported briskly. "They are all secure, and I have posted two soldiers over them, in the event of emergency."

The pain in the captain's face dissolved into a grim expression of approval. Here, at least, was one intelligent officer who knew his duties. "If we cannot get free of this accursed reef," he said, "we shall have to abandon ship. Order the chests brought topside. Find the steward and have him bring up all our provisions and water without delay."

"Aye, aye, sir. At once."

Pelsart ordered the third mate to take soundings fore and aft. The lead showed seven fathoms astern and less at the bow. Pelsart frowned. There was one desperately slim chance. If the ship were lightened, she might be able to ride over the reef . . .

"Throw all cannon overboard!"

"Aye, aye, sir!" The third mate ran down to the gun-deck, summoning all hands not busy with the rigging. He noticed with dismay that several of the seamen were lurching much more than the rolling of the ship could explain.

"You are drunk!" he accused one of them in astonishment.

"Aye!" roared a huge seaman to his left. It was the naked-chested giant, Jan de Breuer. "So are we all! There is only one steward, and there are many of us. Is the wine good enough only for the fish, and not for us? Do you begrudge us cheer at a time like this, Mate?" His voice was as ugly as his face.

The third mate, a man careful not to make himself unpopular by imposing discipline of his own design, shrugged and smiled, "Very well, lads, but let us play fair. You have the wine in your bellies—let us give the fish cannon instead!"

The sailors roared in drunken approval. Willing hands turned to tumbling the heavy cannon over the side. The third mate watched them with a fixed smile on his lips and a terrible foreboding in his heart.

It was an endless night, a black nightmare of a night. Captain Pelsart shook off the arm of the physicioner. "I tell you, sir, leave me!" he fumed. "I do not care how sick I am! This ship is sicker and needs me here! Go below, sir—I am still master of this ship!"

"For God's sake, *mynheer,*" the physicioner begged. "You will kill yourself before the night is out!"

The sky had blackened again. The wind was faster now, and brought with it the first drops of a fresh storm. Captain Pelsart stared gloomily down at the reef which held them prisoner, battering the ship's planks unmercifully.

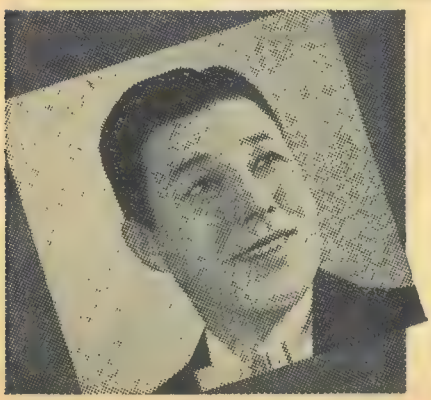
Every cannon had been thrown overside, and still the *Batavia* did not float free. Now he ordered a small anchor cast astern, to minimize the buffeting, while he racked his fevered brain for a new solution. *Was* there a solution?

He summoned the second mate. "Cut down the mainmast."

The mate looked aghast. "The mainmast—!"

"Cut it down, I say!" the captain shouted harshly.

Better a crippled ship than a wrecked one, he reflected bitterly. With the heavy



"Fit for a King"

says GEO. McQUEEN

NEW ORLEANS, La.—"That's why *I* switched to Calvert," says this popular singer. "And I'll warble praises for its milder, mellower taste *any* day. Calvert is truly the monarch of them all!"

CALVERT RESERVE BLENDED WHISKEY—86.8 PROOF—65% GRAIN NEUTRAL SPIRITS. CALVERT DISTILLERS CORP., NEW YORK CITY

mainmast off her back, the *Batavia* might raise her keel above the reef. It was the last hope.

Thomas de Villier flew up to the half-deck, cloak streaming out behind him. He was short of breath when he reached Webbye Hays, who was stationed near the captain.

"Quickly!" the Frenchman panted, gesturing with his drawn sword. "The seamen are out of hand. They have broken into the ship's stores and are drunk on wine and brandy. Some are already molesting women passengers—"

Webbye Hays whirled and raced with him toward the forecastle deck. As they ran, the skies were brightened ash-white by long, jagged bolts of lightning. The wind rose. Thunder died away in the west, and the first ropes of rain coiled down upon the deck.

Pelsart's bushy eyebrows knitted grimly. The rain made glistening streaks on his tanned cheeks. He watched a group of soaked sailors labor to bring down the mainmast by hacking at its tough base with large axes.

It was a dangerous business. The wild pitching of the ship made aim a matter of conjecture.

He held his breath until he heard the first rending, grinding noises. Freed of all stays, the giant mainmast inclined toward the larboard bow. As it toppled, slowly, majestically, Pelsart clenched his fists in silent anguish. His heart sank. Even before it crashed to the deck, Pelsart knew the outcome.

The third mate had let it be chopped so that it fell the length of the ship, instead of broadside. In its downward flight the mast had smashed the yards of the foremast and fouled the ship's rigging. Pelsart groaned aloud.

"Overboard with it!" he shouted furiously.

Slipping and cursing in the heavy rain, the seamen struggled with the dead weight of the fallen mast. All their efforts and curses could not budge it an inch.

Pelsart stared down at the boiling waters. His voice was so dispirited that he had to call twice before the third mate heard him.

"Prepare to abandon ship at dawn... if we are still afloat."

CHAPTER III

THE LAW OF SURVIVAL

JEROME CORNELIS shook rain from a cocked hat which bore the Company crest. He entered passenger's quarters beneath the half-deck, passing soldiers posted at the door by Webbye Hays to keep out the drunken crew. Inside the large room, some of the colonists were kneeling in prayers led by Isbrant Bastians. Others were gathered in melancholy groups, discussing their misfortune.

The supercargo's deep eyes scanned the room until they rested upon Lucretia de Jonge and her husband. The fat man was speaking to her in a low, earnest voice, as though trying to convince her of something. She was looking away, expressionless.

Cornelis made his way toward them inconspicuously. He felt a deep, rich emotion when her eyes met his and returned his gaze.

"*Mynheer* de Jonge," he murmured, "this might seem a poor time to propose business. But we shall all be off ship safely in the morning, and then it may be too late. Would you be averse to making a swift fortune, sir?"

The stout man's eyes, esconced in layers of fat, swerved beadily from side to side. A wary, knowing smile played at his puffy lips. "Something from the ship's chests?" he whispered.

Jerome Cornelis nodded very slowly. "A seaman is waiting on the forecastle deck. You will recognize him by a deep scar along his neck. He has a bag of diamonds he will sell you for a thousand guilder, because he would be hung if they were found upon him. You, however, being a solid citizen above suspicion—"

"Quite so, quite so." Luycas de Jonge's greedy eyes took on a new gleam of respect. "I see you know how to make use of your offices as supercargo. And your share, *mynheer?*"

"Another thousand, after you have had a chance to examine the diamonds and appraise their worth. I, too, you see, could be hung by the *koopman's* powers under the *Artekelbriefs.*"

The fat man deliberated. "How can I

be sure of what I am purchasing?" he asked cannily. "After all, it will be dark—"

"I have thought of that, *mynheer*. You need not pay until after you have taken the diamonds with you and examined them in private."

"Excellent. Will I be permitted on deck now?"

"Tell the ensign at the door that you have my authority. I will wait here for your return."

De Jonge bowed slightly, the jowls beneath his cherubic face behaving like jelly. With a reassuring smile at his wife, he made his way leisurely to the door. He murmured a few words to the ensign, and the soldier nodded, permitting him to pass.

Jerome Cornelis' cheeks seemed more hollow than usual. His deep eyes sought those of Lucretia de Jonge in a taut question.

"The seaman on deck is not waiting with diamonds," he said to her quietly. "He is waiting with a long knife. Shall I call your husband back . . . Lucretia?"

Her eyes met his with cool scrutiny. There was a moistness on her parted red lips.

"No," she whispered. "No . . . Jerome."

HOT, bright daybreak found Captain Pelsart standing alone at the lee rail of the poopdeck. He looked gaunt and haggard. The black velvet cuffs of his blue coat trembled frequently. He stared with bloodshot, sleepless eyes at three low-lying islands that sprawled less than a marine league from the foundering *Batavia*.

The cross-staff had shown their latitude to be 28° south. That would place them at the Houtman Abroholos, discovered ten years earlier by a Dutchman named Houtman; an atoll roughly northwest of what later became Perth in Western Australia. The Dutch East Indies, and the Court of Batavia, lay far to the north.

A sloop sent out for reconnaissance buffeted its way back with difficulty to the foundering full-rigger. Captain Pelsart listened gloomily as the third mate described the three major islands which formed a cup shape. The largest of these —dubbed Big Island—was perhaps a mile long, less than a quarter of that wide. Its extremity was separated by a narrow shoal from Middle Island, the next largest atoll. The third, smallest fragment of the cup—Little Island—was cut off from the others by a wide lagoon.

"No vegetation but shrubs and small trees," the third mate said dismally. "We will need all provisions and water on board. But the islands at least stand ten feet above high tide, which is more than will shortly be said for the *Batavia*. We are breaking up already, Captain. Planks are smashed and ripped open all along the bottom starboard . . ."

Pelsart nodded. He braced himself against the rail as another uncontrollable tremor of fever shook his wiry frame. Then he gave orders for the evacuation. It was a slow and harrowing process, made more treacherous by sudden squalls which rose and subsided throughout the day. But it was largely finished by the time the sun's green afterglow ringed the horizon.

One hundred and twenty persons were taken by small boats, along with bread casks and water barrels, to Big Island. Twenty married couples and nine children were then settled on Middle Island. Captain Pelsart was relieved to see the last of the women leave the ship. Webbye Hays and Thomas de Villier had deployed their soldiers at strategic trouble spots. But Pelsart frowned at the sullen manner in which sailors obeyed the soldiers' swords.

On the other hand, Pelsart noticed curiously, the seamen were quick to obey even the most casual orders of Jerome Cornelis. That, no doubt, was because the supercargo chose to wink at the men's behavior as long as they did their work.

Perhaps that was prudence, under the circumstances. Already one passenger—Luycas de Jonge—had vanished mysteriously, his widow completely at a loss to explain his disappearance. Commanding sailors ashore on strange islands would obviously not be the same as commanding them at sea. The Company and the Netherlands would be far away, powerless to reinforce the strained authority of shipwrecked officers. He pondered the question.

Once the passengers had been debarked, he ordered the bulk of food and water ashore. Squalls made handling the heavy water casks difficult. Many—too many, the captain noted darkly—were swept into the sea.

He sent Webbye Hays, de Villier and some picked soldiers along with the ship's treasure chests. These contained 78,500 silver guilders. In addition there were chests and casks filled with fine silks, brocades and velvets consigned to the Indies. They would still be delivered, Pelsart determined grimly. It would go better with him in Amsterdam if he could show that, at least.

"How many of the crew are still aboard?" he asked Cornelis.

"About fifty, sir. All hard at work trying to salvage what we can while there is time." The supercargo stated this coolly, as Pelsart watched two sailors stagger across the deck with a cask.

"I will take ten with me in the sloop," the captain frowned, turning away. "Then I will send the sloop and all shallops back to you. You may come ashore when you think fit, *mynheer.*"

"I will come with the last boat, Captain. As you can see, sir, it would be advisable for me to remain. I can manage the men more easily here than I could from shore."

Pelsart nodded curtly. He was disturbed by the disorderly condition of the men. Yet Cornelis had proved that, drunk or not, his men had managed to bring up and save a good percentage of provisions, and all of the valuable cargo. There could be no reproach for a job well done under perilous circumstances. And the supercargo's devotion to duty, sticking to the ship until the last man was off, was something of which Pelsart could not but approve.

Making his way down the rope ladder into the sloop, the captain was dismayed by his close view of the *Batavia's* planking. That the Indiaman still held together was a tribute to the ship-builders of Amsterdam, and perhaps accounted for some of the great Dutch victories at sea over Spain and Portugal.

He was too ill to refuse the helping hand of the second mate who was waiting in the sloop. Under one arm, the mate carried a casket of Company jewels which Pelsart had given him for safe-keeping. The captain asked, "How is it ashore?"

"It is useless to take any more food or wine to the islands, Captain. Almost all we took there has been broken into lawlessly. The men are out of hand—sailors as well as some soldiers. None will obey! The French mercenary, de Villier, has had to run one sailor through, causing bitter feeling among the seamen—"

"You are next in command after the supercargo!" the captain said bitterly. "Why have you not exercised your authority?" He reproached himself silently for not having gone ashore sooner.

The second mate glumly watched ten men tumble into the sloop. "Captain, you well know that I am a navigator and nothing more. I have no talent for compelling seamen to obey me." He sighed and nodded to the sailors to trim canvas. "In their present ugly temper, I doubt whether they will even obey *you*, sir!"

FRANCIS PELSART'S arrival at Big Island was the signal for a gathering of passengers and crew. The sick man, without looking directly into any face, could sense the hostility surrounding him. He knew that all reproached him, as commander of the *Batavia,* for the disaster that had befallen them. But he was scarcely prepared for a show of open defiance.

"How dare you deposit us here," one colonist cried, "upon a barren, rocky island without water?"

"Water has been sent ashore here," Pelsart said coldly.

"Indeed? Sixty pints for one hundred and twenty souls? And how long do you think our thirsts can be slaked with that?"

"Aye!" The boatswain, Wooter Loos, pressed to the front of the throng. He had done his work well. Enough water casks had been lost in the handling, as Cornelis' had instructed. "With all respect, sir, it is the duty of the Merchant-Captain to see that we are properly provisioned with the essentials of life!"

Webbye Hays drew his sword angrily. The restraining hand of the preacher, Isbrant Bastians, fell upon his wrist.

"Quarreling will not bring us the water we need," said the preacher quietly. "Captain Pelsart, while you have been busy on

board, we on shore have taken counsel of each other. *Mynheer* Loos has proposed that you should make a reconnaissance of other islands nearby to find one with fresh springs. A majority of the passengers and crew are in agreement with this view."

"Is there no shame among this company?" Webbye Hays broke in hotly. "Who dares give orders to the captain!"

"*Ma foi!*" Thomas de Villier snorted. "And so arduous a task for a man so ill he can barely stand!"

The preacher looked disconcerted. "You are right, and I have said so. But it is the feeling of the majority that only Captain Pelsart knows these waters well enough to navigate them safely and with success—"

Francis Pelsart concealed the fire of anger that burned inside him. Against his outraged pride he set the fact that the decision reached without him was unquestionably a wise one. "Very well, I will go," he forced himself to say. Then he added ironically, "Since we are now apparently a republic, I must perforce respect the desire of the majority."

"I further suggest," Wooter Loos said calmly, "that while you seek water toward the mainland, the marine corporal set out at once for yonder Little Island to explore there for springs."

There was a chorus of approving murmurs. Captain Pelsart stared hard at the man. Even hares, the saying went, pull a lion by the beard when he is old. Webbye Hays looked grim.

"That proposal," he said, "would remove from this island both Captain Pelsart and myself. Who will be responsible here for law and order?"

A hard smile twisted the face of the boatswain. "Why, our good preacher, Isbrant Bastians. Who could dispute the word of a holy man of God?" He tried to keep his voice free of irony as he added, "And you need not fear leaving Thomas de Villier behind for romantic advantage, Corporal. We will be obliging and send him along with you!"

The ensign's fists clenched at the general laughter. "I am not concerned with silly girls at a time like this!" he was nettled into shouting. "There are lives at stake—"

"One moment, *monsieur!*" Thomas de Villier faced him coolly. "I do not much admire your choice of language. You owe an apology to *Mademoiselle* Bastians. Else I should like to remind you of your promise to lay aside your doublet and settle certain matters of contention between us!"

Lips tight, Webbye Hays watched the Frenchman reach for his sword. His own hands did not move. The company fell silent. Captain Pelsart frowned in deep displeasure at this sign of dissension between the leader of the soldiers and his aide.

Wooter Loos' leathery face concealed the elation he felt.

"Put up your sword, de Villier," Webbye Hays said slowly.

His eyes stared unblinkingly at the incensed mercenary. A faint smile of contempt curled de Villier's lips. He relaxed, thrusting his half-drawn sword back into its scabbard with a derisive gesture.

Judith Bastians laughed softly. For the first time, she spoke before the company. "Corporal Hays is quite right," she said with mock gravity. "He can make better use of his sword, on behalf of the company here, as a water-finder—for which worthy purpose he is no doubt preserving it."

Hays' cheeks flamed at the burst of laughter which broke from the throats of the company. In the general hilarity, Wooter Loos' proposal carried the day. The sloop was made ready with provisions and water for Captain Pelsart's departure with seven picked men. Hays, de Villier, four French mercenaries and two Dutch soldiers climbed into a shallop.

Hays took his departure first. His small boat headed out across the choppy waters toward Little Island, two leagues distant from Big Island. Watching them go, a woman standing beside Lucretia de Jonge said tremulously, "It was wrong to send them. You have seen what beasts the men become when they are drunk—"

Lucretia de Jonge drew her long, black eyes away from the listing *Batavia*. Deferring her thoughts of Jerome Cornelis, she stared contemptuously at the woman. "Without water," she said dryly, "we should soon be drinking each other's blood. Would you prefer that?"

Captain Pelsart ordered all shallops out

to the *Batavia* to take off the supercargo and the rest of the crew. Then he turned wearily to the castaways and held up his hand for silence.

"We will do our best to find water for you," he sighed. "When this is done, we shall attempt to reach the Indies and secure aid from the Lord General. You will be under the command of the supercargo, Jerome Cornelis, when he comes ashore. Until then, obey the orders of the second mate. God preserve you all."

He stepped into the waiting sloop. Seamen splashed into the surf beside it, pressing it out to where the rudder could be used. As the sloop heeled into a strong sou'westerly, its one square sail and jib bellying, Isbrant Bastians held his hand aloft.

"Let us pray for the captain's mission," he urged those on shore, "and for our own survival, by the grace of God."

Wooter Loos grinned, spat into the sea and walked off.

CHAPTER IV

END OF THE BATAVIA

THUNDER streaked across the eastern skies, and huge black clouds pressed ominously toward the islands. The castaways busied themselves catching precious drops as the rain came pelting down. Women, heads upturned with open mouths, spread copious overdresses before them. Men inverted hats and held out cloaks.

The seamen set up open casks. Wooter Loos demanded that the second mate empty one of the Company's chests of silk. The mate hesitated, observing the four soldiers Webbye Hays had set on guard over the chests.

He yielded when Loos exploded, "We cannot drink silks!" Royal garments had no sooner been transformed into muddy rags than a woman's scream cut through the loud sound of rain and thunder. Tugging nervously at his long black mustache, the second mate ran upshore toward a small grove.

He saw a woman beating her fists against the face of a lurching sailor who was ripping her overdress with his hands.

"Stop it!" the second mate ordered, pulling the seaman away. The latter staggered backward. The drunken sailor stared at the second mate; then he drew a knife and stumbled forward, roaring like a mad beast. The second mate watched him in a paralyzed stupor, legs trembling, heart pounding. As the knife slashed toward him, he turned and fled down the beach. A loud, mocking laugh followed him.

The second mate had had enough. Heavy seas had turned back the shallops sent out to the *Batavia* by Captain Pelsart. Now, in desperation, the second mate begged Wooter Loos to make another try with five sailors. If they could not reach the ship to take off Jerome Cornelis, they were to ask him to get to the shallop by means of a raft made of lashed planks.

"And in the name of God," he urged desperately, "make haste!"

BLACK clouds raced through the sky over the ripped, half-sunk Indiaman. Jerome Cornelis, holding on to the rail, watched the shallop from Big Island hesitate in the valley of two wave peaks. The seas were high now, crashing with thunderous force against the groaning *Batavia,* which lay half on her side and half beneath water. A giant roller lifted up full-length.

Wooter Loos brought the shallop as close to the reef as he dared. Then he stood up at the bow and shouted through cupped hands. Though some of his words were swept away, Cornelis understood the message. He smiled with grim pleasure at the added news of the departures of Captain Pelsart and Webbye Hays.

"Return!" he shouted back to the shallop. "We will get ashore without your assistance!"

He straightened and made his way along the half-deck by pulling at stays. The deck was now so canted that it was almost impossible to walk along it freely except at the starboard rail.

Locating the ship's carpenter, Cornelis ordered him to fall to making rafts, using all hands. Then he summoned the huge, naked-waisted sailor, Jan de Breuer. The sailor grinned joyfully as he listened to a

few terse instructions. He moved off to confer unobtrusively with a number of sailors in turn. Each nodded as he passed on. It was done so deftly and casually, that the eleven sailors who feared the risks of piracy noticed nothing.

The rest of the crew, their hands engaged in making rafts, kept their eyes fixed on the supercargo through the fierce curtains of rain that pelted the decks. He mounted the poopdeck slowly, a step at a time. His eyes gleamed with the joy of power.

And then he stood erect upon the highest deck—the signal.

Knives raised and plunged sharply. Loud screams and cries rose above the low rumble of thunder. One voice shrieked, "Margaret . . . Margaret!" There was a furious scuffle near the foremast, where one blade had missed its mark. It ended with a hoarse gasp as four other knives plunged into the victim who had escaped.

"Hoorah for Captain-General Cornelis!" Jan de Breuer's great booming laughter could be heard from stern to bow. "Hoorah for Barbary! Hoorah for liberty, lads!"

The supercargo stared down at the decks beneath him. His long, narrow face wore the same courteous, affable smile familiar to passengers who had dined with him for almost a year.

"We are all of one purpose now," he announced blandly. "Be good enough to pitch your handiwork into the sea, gentlemen, and fall to finishing the rafts. I shall have more intriguing employment for you ashore!"

Feeling pleased, he turned to glance at the sky over the taffrail. His smile suddenly froze. The wave was mammoth-sized and blacker than the clouds overhead. Its crest was higher than the poopdeck, and the *Batavia* stood squarely in its path.

For a paralyzing instant, Cornelis stared at it aghast. Then he scrambled and half-fell to the deck. He spilled against the idle steering wheel. Gaining his feet, he raced frantically down to the main-deck. He had just time to be conscious of the horror-stricken faces of the sailors. The last thing he saw was the saucer-like eyes of Jan de Breuer . . .

The giant wave smothered the pitching *Batavia*.

Cornelis felt the iron weight of the ocean fall about him. He hugged the fallen mainmast desperately. Whirling, pulsating currents of enraged foam scraped him along the length of the mast, tearing his arms free and almost snapping his neck as it spilled him over. Terrified groans mingled with the crash of waters.

With a great crunching and ear-splitting noise, the dying ship burst open from seam to seam.

Clinging frantically to a splintered piece of yard from the horizontal mainmast, the supercargo managed to keep his head above the boiling waters. He closed his eyes in pain, and saw a brief vision of his old apothecary shop in Haarlem, the scolding mouth of his shrewish wife, and then the lovely, haunting eyes of the woman he had won by murder, Lucretia de Jonge.

Whirlpools beneath the waves' surface sucked at his feet.

He was a poor swimmer. Yet strangely, he no longer felt fear or panic. He would not die. He was sure of that, even in these swirling waters, with immense fragments of the ship exploding in the torrents around him. Fate did not intend his life to end as incompletely as this.

Jerome Cornelis knew that he would yet live to fulfill the prophecy of greatness that burned inside him and gave him no rest.

NO WORDS passed between Webbye Hays and Thomas de Villier during the crossing from Big Island to Little Island. The Frenchman's twinkling gray eyes wore a contemptuous, humorous gleam that was more eloquent than anything he could have said. The four French mercenaries in the shallop were in equally high spirits, while the two Dutch soldiers looked glum and sullen.

They landed at the height of the storm which had split the *Batavia* in half. The soldiers leaped from the shallop and ran to take shelter from the deluge beneath small trees.

Now Webbye Hays did a strange thing.

All eyes turned toward him as he removed his black hat, dropped his black cloak to the ground, and stripped off his

leather doublet. Clad only in a white shirt of plain cotton, and military breeches, he drew his sword out of its scabbard.

He faced Thomas de Villier across the slanting sheet of rain.

"My doublet is off now," he said quietly.

The Frenchman's trim beard pointed in surprise. He cocked his head to one side and fingered his impressive mustache.

"Comment?" he said quizzically. "Less than two hours before you refuse to cross swords with me, losing face before the entire ship's company. Now, with none but a handful of our own soldiers as witnesses, you choose to prove your courage. *Ma foi,* you are a strange fellow, *monsieur!"*

"You are a stupid one, ensign." Hays' tone was bitter. "I warned you there was mutiny brewing. To have fought you before the company would have encouraged the mutineers and dismayed the passengers. There is no need for that caution here. Draw!"

De Villier's face fell. *"Parbleu!"* he frowned, and bit his thumb reflectively. "I am unquestionably an ass!"

"You have asked for satisfaction, de Villier," the marine corporal said tersely, "and you shall get it. I will have no soldier in my command who obeys me out of politeness alone!"

The Frenchman shrugged. "I am paid to obey you, *monsieur."*

"If you are a better swordsman than I, take my place as leader, and I will obey you. If you are not, you will continue to obey my commands without question. Including those with which you quarreled while aboard ship. Will you draw?"

"Agreed!" laughed Thomas de Villier. He swept off his plumed, soaked hat and unbuttoned his doublet. "Spoken with as much courage as lack of wit! I think it only fair to warn you, Corporal, that I have pierced through some twenty men in my time—eleven of these mortally. My men can give you their names."

"Judging by your elegant manners, de Villier," Hays said sourly, "I would believe you had pierced them with your sharp weapon of language. But try your sword this time, sir!"

Unruffled, de Villier drew his rapier. He moved out into the heavy rain, which made a noise at it splattered on his scalloped linen shirt. The two men touched swords. As they commenced dueling in the area between the short trees, the French and Dutch soldiers ringed them for a better view.

Webbye Hays knew at once that his adversary had not been bragging. De Villier was a skilled, cool swordsman. He met every thrust with a graceful parry, and seemed to be content with dueling effortlessly on the defensive. As he skipped nimbly on the wet stones of the escarpment, his manner seemed to imply mockingly, "Is this your best, *monsieur?"*

Hays tried a surprise low lunge, his right knee bent as far as he dared. The Frenchman danced back nimbly, eyebrows lifting in amused appreciation. He whirled to one side, slashing his sword as he did, so that it ripped the shoulder of Hays' shirt without touching flesh. The marine corporal flushed deeply.

Retreating warily, Hays abandoned the offensive. It was a candid admission that he did not have much hope of finding an opening in the Frenchman's expert guard, as long as de Villier chose to duel defensively. The agile, trim-bearded man accepted the challenge. He pressed forward with lightning swordsmanship.

His rapier thrust from so many directions with flashing speed that Hays caught his breath trying to keep the Frenchman's steel from piercing him. Chin low, the marine corporal's eyes danced alertly to watch every deft sweep of de Villier's sword.

He was forced to give ground, step by step. De Villier pressed him backward with a nimble wrist that flecked a dazzling series of thrusts toward his chest. The Frenchman fought coolly, with the trace of a smile above his beard. Raindrops mixed with heavy perspiration on Webbye Hays' broad brow.

Now de Villier began to exhibit startling, strange thrusts such as Hays had never before encountered in the *Shutterhofs* or on a battlefield. The Frenchman's swordplay was sheer wizardry. At one moment his rapier flew toward Hays a bare few inches above the ground. The next, it whipped the air a fraction from the Dutchman's ear. He seemed armed with two, even a multiple of weapons.

With each odd thrust de Villier grinned and counted aloud in French. His men laughed. Webbye Hays occasionally scored a telling riposte, because of the Frenchman's more open guard. But each in turn was skillfully parried.

"Douze!" cried de Villier as he tried a low cut. The marine corporal parried in prime. Suddenly they were body to body, hilt crossed over hilt. The Frenchman stared at Hays with amused respect over the lace handkerchief in his cuff.

"Well done!" he admitted, with a tilt of his fine head. "Shall we put up our swords? You have proved your abilities, Corporal. No man ever continued with me longer than *neuf!*"

"Here is one who will make you run out of numbers!" Hays panted. "If you are on your feet that long!"

De Villier laughed. As they broke away from each other, the Frenchman tried a slashing head cut. Hays parried with a high prime. Their swords rang sharply as the marine corporal deliberately fell back toward the tallest tree of the little grove.

An idea had suddenly taken shape in his mind.

Counting silently to himself, he continued to back toward the tree. If his observation had been correct, when he had ticked off in his mind the number eleven, de Villier would make his next grand lunge. Consciously or unconsciously, there was a regularity in the spectacular attacks of the Frenchman that made them predictable.

With each odd thrust, de Villier grinned and counted aloud in French. His men laughed.

It was a risky decision . . .

Hays was forced to drop his guard momentarily as he sprang suddenly to one side.

At that same instant de Villier cried, *"Quinze!"* His sword thrust sharply forward at groin level. The marine corporal's shrewd guess had been right. His abrupt leap to one side presented only the target of the tree.

Before de Villier could recover, his rapier pierced firmly into the trunk. And stuck there. He jerked at it furiously as Hays stood by, sword lowered, smiling. With an oath the Frenchman released his grip on the foil and let it stick there, swaying back and forth.

Fists clenched at his sides in mortification, he faced Hays in the pouring rain. He was not smiling now. "What are you waiting for?" he snapped. "Run me through! I deserve it! You are entitled to the fruits of this duel, *monsieur!*"

"Take your sword," Webbye Hays smiled, breathing heavily. He pointed to the slash in his shirt. "Your dispensation is repaid."

De Villier stared at him. Then he looked away toward the tree which still held his rapier a vibrating prisoner. A slow smile broke out beneath his dripping mustache.

He walked to the tree and worked the sword loose.

As Hays took his stance, de Villier raised his rapier. Then he hesitated, and thrust the blade decisively back into his scabbard.

"Mais, non!" he grinned. "I concede, *monsieur*. And I thank you for teaching me a useful trick. If I am one of France's best swordsmen, you are assuredly Holland's greatest."

The marine corporal sheathed his sword. He smiled wryly with open relief. "If I had not thought of the tree, de Villier, I should have been buried beneath it. I tell you frankly I much prefer your sword beside mine than against it!"

"Let us try them both at water divining," the Frenchman chuckled. Webbye Hays frowned as the words called up an image of Judith Bastians' lovely, mocking face.

He forced a little smile and nodded abruptly.

CHAPTER V

MUTINY AND MASSACRE

WHEN the *Batavia* broke open, some on board were killed instantly, hurled against masts and deck walls. Those who survived swam desperately toward the closest atoll, Big Island. A few drowned, others clung to wreckage. The giant sailor, Jan de Breuer, was among those who made the shore safely.

Jerome Cornelis spent two days clinging to the mainmast, which now floated free upon the sea. In all this while, the storm did not abate for more than a sullen hour at a time, making rescue attempts or searches by the shallops impossible.

From the mainmast Cornelis managed to transfer to a passing yard, which he believed would float more lightly and quickly into shore. Tiring of this, he finally lashed himself to a spar with some stays. Threshing the turbulent water as best he could, he was at length washed into shallows where he could gain his legs.

Gaunt and bearded, he rose from the water like some mythical creature, his long black hair streaming over his shoulders. A fierce exultance shook him as he waded slowly to shore. Death, inevitable death, had been evaded. He had been spared for the great triumphs which would now fall like fruit into his hands.

His glance took in the shape of his future empire—a curved stretch of barren land with a scattering of stunted trees.

Cornelis Island!

He was first seen by a sailor foraging the far part of the island for casks and barrels which might have floated loose from the Indiaman's wreckage. The sailor was sworn to secrecy, and dispatched to summon Wooter Loos, who came hurriedly.

"Damn!" Loos swore. "What good news to see you alive!"

"Did you expect less?" Cornelis smiled wanly. "There is too much unfinished business. How is it ashore?"

The boastswain told him. "Well done," the supercargo said thoughtfully. "Now we may move swiftly, with no opposition."

He gave Loos his orders. Sailors and

renegade soldiers in the conspiracy were to be notified of a meeting at midnight, while others on the island slept. Soldiers guarding the Company chests were to be silently dealt with, and the mutineers armed with flintlock pistols from the chests. More immediately, Cornelis wanted provisions and clothing.

"And send the woman Lucretia de Jonge to me!"

Some hours later he was stretched out on the sand, his thin arms tucked behind his head, one knee upraised. He was newly clothed in a scarlet robe, embroidered with gold and silver, brought him along with some bread and a small cask of water.

The supercargo regarded his brilliant costume with some amusement. But soon, he reflected, it would be more appropriate upon him than ever it could be on the back of any Indies Prince.

A low, startling voice murmured, "Good day . . . Jerome."

He rose swiftly to a sitting position and turned. Lucretia de Jonge stood regarding him, an elusive smile at her wide, fascinating mouth. Still in her low-cut robes, she was a breathless sight to see at high noon on a barren island.

She let her dark eyes roam over the scarlet costume. "Has the supercargo turned Emperor?" Her tone was light, mocking.

"Aye, Lucretia." He sprang to his feet and advanced toward her slowly. He placed his hands upon her magnificent shoulders. The touch of her was a shock to his senses. "And before morning, you will reign beside me here on Cornelis Island as Empress!"

Her slender eyebrows raised. "Is this miserable island," she murmured, "the height of your ambition? I thought I saw more than that in your eyes these many months at sea—"

"And so you did!" he assured her eagerly. "This is but a beginning, until we build a new vessel from the ship's wreckage."

"Can this be done?"

"Our carpenter boy says it can. Then for the high seas again, to seize a frigate. With this we shall roam and collect treasure from the ships of Charles, Philip and Frederic—"

"And then?"

"And then to Barbary, where I will build you a white castle."

"With golden shutters," she breathed.

"Aye. With golden shutters!"

She closed her eyes and the flesh over her high cheekbones drew taut. He stared at her parted lips, the hollow of her slender neck, the white swelling flesh barely imprisoned by the bodice beneath her red satin underdress . . .

His hands slid roughly from her shoulders to meet behind her back. Her lips responded to his hungrily, and their bodies clung fiercely, with the wild passion that had been caged for so long.

"I wish," he muttered, "it were possible to murder your husband over again!"

His eyes fell upon the heap of gorgeously-colored silken robes on the sand that had been brought with the one he had chosen. He remembered his dream to tear from her the wealth and finery she wore by virtue of her husband. And to clothe her anew with princely raiment won by his own hands . . .

Fast HELP for HEADACHE
UPSET STOMACH
JUMPY NERVES
BROMO-SELTZER
FIGHTS HEADACHE THREE WAYS
For fast help from ordinary headache always take Bromo-Seltzer. It fights headache three ways:
1. Relieves Pain of Headache.
2. Relieves Discomfort of Upset Stomach.
3. Quiets Jumpy Nerves.
Caution: Use only as directed. Get Bromo-Seltzer at your drug store fountain or counter today. A product of Emerson Drug Company since 1887.
BROMO SELTZER
HEADACHE NEURALGIA

THE moon was bright, three-quarters full and yellow, when forty men sat cross-legged in a half-circle near the beach. Each was armed with a flintlock pistol, and wore a bandolier fitted with ammunition boxes, hung from the shoulders. When the men stirred, these made tinkling noises above the splashing of the waves. They were like music to Jerome Cornelis.

He stood in front of them, the moon silhouetting his high forehead and sharp, thin nose. His paleness was accentuated by the fiery garb he wore, grotesque yet awe-inspiring on that barren, low island. Behind him, clad in an amaranthine robe of equal brilliance and majesty, sat the beautiful woman, Lucretia de Jonge.

"Comrades," said Jerome Cornelis softly, swinging a pistol around his fingers, "the building of our new ship may require all of three months. Meanwhile, we must manage to stay alive. You all know how scarce water and provisions are on this and yonder island. There are many throats to be filled while we wait. What do you believe should be done?"

"Fill them with knives!" growled Wooter Loos.

"Aye!" Jan de Breuer shouted. "We will last longer then!"

"You yourselves have made the decision," Cornelis nodded, "and I bow to your judgment. I therefore suggest that we repair to the other end of the island and quietly accomplish, as an act of pure self-preservation, what has been proposed. Use only your knives, so that none may awaken prematurely—"

"*Mynheer* Cornelis!" Unexpectedly the carpenter, a young boy named Tewis Jans, stood up. Even in moonlight it could be seen that his limbs were shaking, and his downy cheeks pale as sand.

"As you know," he quavered, "I am of one heart and soul with all of you. But, sir, is it necessary to our enterprise of piracy that innocent Dutch be murdered while they sleep?"

The supercargo stared hard at the boy for a moment. Before he could reply, Lucretia de Jonge spoke from her place at his shoulder.

"My husband," she said softly, and there was a murmur of surprise as she used the word, "has not explained too clearly, I am afraid. Our motives should be distinctly understood. This is in no wise murder. It is a purely humane action, to spare these people the prolonged sufferings of starvation and thirst. Is it not more merciful to let them die peacefully in their sleep?"

"But women . . . too?" the boy stammered miserably.

Several men burst out laughing. "Nay!" one of them shouted. "The lad's right! Are we to have none of the good things of life? We shall need certain of the ladies. The young ones!"

Tewis Jans, the young carpenter, sidled away, and then raced to the sleeping grounds of the castaways. His eyes sought and found Isbrant Bastians, sprawled beneath a tree beside his daughter. He roused the man of God by shaking his shoulders vigorously.

The preacher stared at the boy in horror as the latter breathlessly told him what was afoot. "God of mercy!" Isbrant Bastians whispered, shaken. He placed trembling fingers on the young sailor's wrist. "Take my daughter with you in a small boat, I beg of you! I will raise the alarm here and we will do what we can."

"It is futile, sir!" Tewis Jans protested. "Better that some escape than none at all. Webbye Hays must be told. Come with us!"

The preacher shook his head. "I will be needed here."

He roused his daughter. Drowsily, and without question, Judith Bastians permitted herself to be led to the shore. Jans tugged at a small boat as the preacher pushed. Together they scraped it off the beach into the shallows. Isbrant Bastians lifted his daughter and placed her at the bow of the boat. As he did, Tewis Jans brought an oar down heavily on his head.

The preacher sagged limply into the water. The boy caught him before he fell and dumped him into the boat. Then he pushed off swiftly, rowing as fast and as silently as he could. He shook his head violently as he saw the girl about to scream.

"In the name of God, miss," he begged, "make no sound! I had to do that to save your father's life! In a moment every passenger on the island will be slaughtered! Watch the shore!"

The girl stared toward the retreating island, across waters rippling a silvery, idyllic hue. Terror came into her soft round face. When her eyes widened in horror, Tewis Jans, sweating desperately over the oars, knew what it was that she saw.

Ghastly screams, agonized cries, hoarse shouts floated loudly and clearly through the luminous night. Somewhere a man laughed hysterically, and his voice ebbed in a rattling gasp. A flintlock was fired, then another, and another . . .

DEATH came unexpectedly to the castaways on Big Island. Some died believing the horror that fell upon them to be a vivid nightmare. Others cried out the names of beloved ones, and across the world in far-off Holland there were many who stirred uneasily in soft beds.

The second mate, a light sleeper, woke to find cat-footed shadows moving about him. Instantly aware that something was wrong, he crawled to his knees and took concealment behind a stunted tree. His long mustache drooped as he witnessed sights which made his melancholy eyes blur with terror.

With dismay he realized he had left his flintlock belt behind. Cold fear in his heart, he dropped to his knees and began to crawl cautiously back toward where he had been lying. He saw the weapon butt glinting in the moonlight. Throat dry and tight, he made his way slowly toward

Crazed with fear he stared up and saw the enormous head of Jan de Breuer looming above him.

it. There was a heavy sound above him.

He flattened instantly. A man's body fell backward over him with a groan. A heel struck him sharply in the ribs.

He waited with pounding heart, then warily crawled on. In a few seconds more he reached out a trembling hand. A glow of elation swept over him as his fingers touched the flintlock.

A heavy, nailed boot descended upon his wrist. He cried out in sudden pain, his body twisting like a garter snake when trod upon. Crazed with fear, he stared up and saw the enormous head of Jan de Breuer looming above him in the sky. A bandolier stretched tightly across the naked, muscular chest.

"Here's a pretty one!" jeered the huge sailor. "The second mate himself, our officer in command—"

"I wanted not charge of this accursed island," the second mate babbled. "I am a navigator, and nothing more. Let me go, for the sake of God! I will take an oath as one of you, and swear allegiance! Let me go, comrade—"

"Comrade!" Jan de Breuer grinned. With the leisurely manner of a sailor breaking open a tin of provisions, he plunged a knife into the breast of the second mate. Then he tipped the dying man over with his foot to bleed into the sands.

De Breuer found and killed four more colonists in easy rotation. Then he came upon Wooter Loos holding a young dark-haired girl by the shoulders. The girl's sister, an older, grim-faced woman, was beating her fists against the boatswain's face.

"Take your hands off her!" the older woman screamed. "Let her go, you filthy brute!"

"I will," the boatswain said tightly, "if you will tell me where to find Judith Bastians. Where has she gone?"

"I don't know! Let my sister go, I beg of you!"

The scarred sailor muttered sardonically. Then he swung the frightened girl into his arms and carried her toward the beach. Her agonized sister wept and screamed, "Susan! *Susan!*"

Jan de Breuer laughed.

A prudent distance away, Cornelis and Lucretia de Jonge stood watching the night's spectacle. The supercargo's face was calm, but his eyes were glowing. His long fingers pressed the woman's hand warmly. "I have a surprise for you tomorrow, Lucretia."

"I am no longer easily surprised," she smiled dryly. "You might as well tell me now."

He laughed. "You are a woman, for all your manly qualities! Very well. Pelsart gave into the care of the second mate a casket. It contains my wedding present to you, and you shall wear them when we are married tomorrow."

"Jewels!" she breathed.

"Aye—the wealth of the Indies! Diamonds, rubies, pearls, gold chains and emeralds! You will be the most incredible bride in the world's history, decked from your fingers to your toes in a brilliance any queen would envy!"

Her fingers squeezed his in a surge of ecstasy. Then she put her arms about his neck and kissed him. He held her tightly. The screams of women, the groans of men, the soft lapping of the waves merged with their embrace.

CHAPTER VI

DEATH ON MIDDLE ISLAND

MORNING brought a soft northerly wind and a pale lemon sun. The only sounds were the breakers rolling into shore. Men and women sprawled upon the ground in grotesque postures. Some were asleep, some were dead, and some were in a profound drunken stupor. Wine, brandy and schnapps kegs lifted empty caverns to the sky.

Wooter Loos found the supercargo at the far part of the island, awake and composing a document on a chest which served him for a table. The woman Lucretia slept nearby on a bed of silks.

"Three are missing, Cornelis," the boatswain said slowly.

"Missing?" The supercargo looked up. "How missing?"

"I have accounted for all—sleeping or dead—but three who were on this island. The preacher, his daughter and our own water-blooded carpenter, the boy Tewis Jans."

"Damn!" The tall man in the scarlet robe rose quickly and threw his quill to the sand. "Have you checked the boats?"

"Aye. One is gone!"

"They would probably have made for Middle Island, since that is closest," Cornelis mused. "If so, the company there will soon be in a state of alarm."

"Where can they go—alarmed or not?"

"They will have time to prepare defenses. Perhaps they will get word to Hays and his men. We must finish last night's work at once! Gather the men and take them across the lagoon. I trust you to see that there will be no fugitives this time!"

"Except the preacher's daughter." The boatswain's hollow cheeks sucked in morosely. "That wench is mine!"

In less than an hour two shallops, weighted to the gunwales, rowed across the sparkling lagoon in open sunlight. Landing on Middle Island, the party advanced two hundred yards along the beach before Wooter Loos called a halt. Above them on a rock stood the ship's physicioner, his lean form swaying against the reddening sky of late morning. He was in his cups, but his red-veined cheeks were taut with anger. He waved a sword.

"What do you want on this island?" he challenged. "Why do you all carry knives and flintlocks?"

"We bring you some bitter medicine, physicioner!" the boatswain grinned. "Have you not heard the news? A new liberty has been proclaimed—a liberty of sailors and soldiers from their overlords and oppressors!"

The physicioner pointed his sword accusingly. "Mutiny!" he cried. "You are all fools! When Pelsart returns, he will string up every one of you to the yards!"

"Mutiny?" Loos professed to be astonished. "But how can this be mutiny when we are on dry land? We are our own masters now, physicioner! Besides, we do naught but obey the commands of the ranking officer in charge—the supercargo."

"So it is Cornelis, is it?" He wheeled unsteadily. "Halt your men, boatswain—or I will pierce the first who advances!"

He brandished his sword in a clumsy, intoxicated manner. The boatswain laughed and lifted his snaphance. He aimed it calmly at the man on the rock. There was a bright flash, a curl of smoke and a loud clap of noise. The physicioner dropped his sword.

He slipped from the rock, falling to the sand on his side.

Wooter Loos brandished his gun and broke into a run along the beach, followed by his men. A hundred yards along they turned in through some small trees. Turmoil broke loose among the twenty married couples and children. Women fled screaming. Their husbands were quickly run through, stabbed or shot.

Several of the younger women, seeing their husbands murdered before their eyes, went mad with grief and rage. They clawed at their attackers. One succeeded in gouging out a burly soldier's eye. A woman whose child had been slain in her arms flew for the throat of the sailor who had murdered it. So savage was the strength in her fingers that he could only save himself, coughing and gasping, by bringing his knife up behind her.

A boy of about nine screamed in fright from the topmost branch of a small tree. Jan de Breuer grinned and quickly shinnied up the tree with his knife between his teeth.

One small branch snapped beneath his heavy boots.

IT WAS well past high noon when the two boats returned to Big Island, bringing with then four of the young married women, ten casks of bread and three barrels of water. Wooter Loos gave an account of the undertaking to Jerome Cornelis, who frowned at the four extra mouths to feed but felt too pleased with his successes to offer any reproach.

"Break open all chests," he ordered. "Dress every man like a nobleman—for now we are *all* noblemen! Cornelis' men shall be the only pirates clad in red coats laced with silver and gold!"

"There are still a few wine casks!" Jan de Breuer reminded him eagerly. "Shall these be left to spoil in the sun? Our throats are cracking with dryness!"

Cornelis nodded expansively. "Every cask may be opened. This is our day of coronation—I wish all to rejoice!"

Shouting frenziedly, the men rushed toward the Company chests. Lids were snapped open with knives, locks blown off with balls fired from pistols. The drab island was quickly festooned with riotous colors—rich satins, silks and fine linen.

Men fought over choice robes. Others seized women in drunken revelry. Some men ignored both raiment and women, reclining beside the wine casks.

A soldier and sailor, both intoxicated, drew weapons in an argument over a sad-faced young woman, who had been widowed only a few hours before. More in love of jest than in desire, Jan de Breuer dashed between them, threw the woman over his shoulder, and raced away with her down the beach.

The courtiers of Prince Frederic Henry of Orange had never been as dazzlingly dressed, or as drunk, as those at the court of Captain-General Jerome Cornelis. His election was a swift formality, proposed by Wooter Loos and carried by hiccoughing shouts. Amid drunken shouts and ribald jests, the new Captain-General presented the consort of his choice to his subjects.

With the sun sparkling stars and fire from her wealth of jewels and necklaces, no woman had ever seemed more breath-taking.

"I hereby decree that Lucretia de Jonge shall be my wife and your Queen." The men cheered. Lucretia bowed ironically.

The cheering was suddenly cut short when Wooter Loos suddenly scrambled upon a wooden chest and thrust his arm toward Little Island. "Look!" he cried. "The smoke signal! The marine corporal has found fresh-water springs!"

Despite the two leagues that separated the islands, the mutineers saw three distinct columns of smoke rising in the air.

"Excellent!" smiled Jerome Cornelis. "Our dear friend Webbye Hays has solved the water problem for us!"

"For *us?*" sneered the boatswain. "Nay, he knows of us by this time by the reports of the preacher and carpenter. Those signals are for the corpses he imagines alive on Middle Lsland!"

"I said—for us," Cornelis insisted blandly. "Make the shallops ready. We are about to pay our neighbors a call!"

WEBBYE HAYS noted carefully that the two shallops headed toward Little Island were heavily loaded. Their gunwales rose only inches above the now calm sea.

Even at this distance, the two boats were a blaze of colors. With amazement, the marine corporal realized that the men were elaborately dressed in rich silks and satins.

"Perhaps they hope to be mistaken for island princes!" said de Villier sarcastically. "I have known lords who seemed villians, but these are the first villians I have known to seem lords!"

Hays turned abruptly to Judith Bastians. "It would be better for you to conceal yourself on the opposite side of the island."

"It would be better for me to stay here," the girl said coolly, "to help any who are hurt. You will need every assistance."

"Let her stay," de Villier urged. "I will answer for her protection. You may count my sword for ten!"

"Against firearms?" Hays asked sardonically.

"I accept Monsieur de Villier's gallant offer," the girl said defiantly, throwing back her head. "I will stay here!"

"You will do as I order you!" Hays retorted grimly.

"Judith!" said Isbrant Bastians ominously.

"Damn!" Utterly indifferent to their shocked faces, the girl picked up her skirts and made her way upshore. Thomas de Villier's eyes smiled after her in amused admiration.

Hays sent the young carpenter to summon the six soldiers to a sheltered grove near the fresh-water spring they had discovered. A desperate plan of defense was shaping in his mind. The shallops were close enough for him to count the number of the enemy. Each boat held twelve. Twenty-four men armed with snaphance pistols, against ten on shore with nine swords and one gun.

When all ten were gathered, he rapidly explained his plan of battle. Heads nodded, first in surprised delight, then amusement.

"Ma foi!" de Villier chuckled. *"Quelle*

une ruse de guerre! None but a Dutch head could conceive it!"

"Let us not forget," Isbrant Bastians reminded him severely, "that the power of God is also on our side!"

"He is most welcome," de Villier smiled. "But I hope, *monsieur,* you will place your reliance also upon your sword!"

They split up into two groups of five, one under the leadership of Hays, the other of de Villier. Each group retired in opposite directions, taking up positions of concealment behind groves close to the shore. Then all began to strip, after which they buckled baldrics and swords over their naked bodies. Tewis Jans laid his flintlock on the ground where he could find it easily.

At a hand signal from Webbye Hays, all crawled down the width of the beach behind the concealment of large rocks and bushes.

There was almost no audible splash as each man quietly entered the water, keeping his body immersed. The marine corporal waited a few seconds, gauging the distance of the shallops. Then filling his lungs, he slid beneath the surface of the water.

The nine others submerged immediately. There was not even a ripple to show their presence. Ten pairs of legs and arms threshed silently underwater, headed for the boats.

The shallops came gilding toward shore. Jerome Cornelis sat at the prow of one, grim and still as a graven image. Wooter Loos guided the other boat. The men behind them were laughing and joking loudly, some brandishing pistols. All wore bandoliers, and some—the renegade soldiers—were armed with their swords as well.

On either side of the attacking convoy, the surface of the water suddenly broke. With startling precision, five wet heads appeared beside the dangerously low gunwales, larboard, of the supercargo's boat. A split second later five more heads gasped above the surface starboard of Wooter Loos.

Jerome Cornelis swiftly drew the flintlock from his belt.

Aiming it at Webbye Hays' head, he shrieked, *"Fire!"*

CHAPTER VII

FRENCHMAN'S PRICE

THE hands of the men in the water gripped hard upon the gunwales facing them. Webbye Hays had made no error in anticipating that the shallops were gravely overloaded for the attack. The combined downward pull of ten muscular pairs of arms, exerted with all the strength in their bodies, tipped the boats sufficiently to allow water to pour over the gunwales.

The panic of the men in the boats made them overturn swiftly. As Jerome Cornelis squeezed the trigger of his pistol, he was already being flung into the water. The ball whistled ridiculously into the sky. Before any of the attackers could fully grasp what had happened to them, they were floundering and gasping in the sea.

Some who could not swim yelled in terror, grabbing frantically to hold on to the upturned boats. Others threshed about, cursing the elaborate robes which tangled arms and legs. Most rid themselves as quickly as possible of the heavy, wet and useless bandoliers which pulled them down. Pistols sank to the bottom. Those who clung to the boats and tried to use their arms found the flintlocks useless, powder drenched and unable to spark.

One of Wooter Loos' men grabbed the foot of Thomas de Villier as the Frenchman splashed away. De Villier twisted around in the water and gripped his attacker's head in the crook of his elbow. Then he lowered his elbow. The water churned violently. His victim finally broke the hold and swam off furiously. Spluttering with laughter, de Villier followed the other naked swimmers into shore.

Ten strong, Hays' unclad company lined the beach in one rank, facing the sea. They waited for those of the brilliantly-garbed attackers with swords to swim to shore and join the battle. Tewis Jans, who had retrieved his flintlock, enjoyed himself by whistling balls at targets in the water.

"They seem far too reluctant," Thomas de Villier grinned. "Perhaps they prefer to continue the engagement at sea!"

"They are far from defeated," Hays warned. "There are still many with swords—see! Here they come!"

Only seven men now clung to the boats —apparently unable to swim or without knives or swords. Seventeen others, including Jerome Cornelis, were swimming toward the island. The first to reach shore, his face burning with outrage, was the giant sailor, Jan de Breuer. The carpenter lifted his pistol, but Thomas de Villier pressed its muzzle down and stepped forward to engage the sailor.

The Frenchman waited with sword down for de Breuer to gain his feet and his weapon, an extremely long knife. Curses pouring from his throat, the sailor set upon de Villier with hacking sweeps of his blade. De Villier parried them easily and gracefully.

Finally, as their weapons rang together, the Frenchman smiled. "I doubt that you know any prayers, *mon petit,* so I will ask the preacher to say one for you." He raised his voice. "Will you kindly pray for this man, *Monsieur* Bastians, and let me knew when you are done?"

The bald preacher nodded grimly. He bent his head and raised it again in an instant. "He is prayed for!"

"Farewell, *mon petit,*" de Villier smiled. With a sudden fury, his sword flashed like whirling steel. The giant sailor's mouth fell open helplessly. His long knife abruptly leaped out of his hand. A curse died unspoken on his lips as de Villier's rapier pierced him squarely in the heart. His heavy body thumped to sand.

Now each man in Hays' company had at least one adversary, and steel clanged on steel. De Villier raced down the beach to pick another opponent from the dripping attackers emerging from the waters. He saw Webbye Hays, still stark naked, holding off two men at once—mutinous soldiers who had once been in his command.

The Frenchman engaged one and ran him through in thirteen seconds. To his surprise, Hays permitted him to take over the other adversary. De Villier's eyes, as he dueled with careless ease, followed the marine corporal. He saw Webbye Hays enter the water. And then the Frenchman saw where he was going.

Jerome Cornelis had not come ashore. The lean, black-haired man was standing waist-high in the mild waves, urging his men on.

Isbrant Bastians, who had killed one of the attackers in a fair duel, at the cost of only a slight flesh wound, turned and saw Tewis Jans fighting on the beach with a sailor in a green satin cloak. The sailor had the boy from behind, wresting for possession of the flintlock. The preacher hurried toward them. Before he could reach them, another sailor lunged upon Tewis Jans and plunged a knife into his neck.

He sprang up with the flintlock, but Isbrant Bastians was quicker than his years. Leaping forward, the preacher pierced the sailor through the side until his hilt touched the man's ribs.

"Those who live by the sword," he gasped bitterly, "shall perish by the sword!"

Cursing, the other sailor leaped upon him, and the two men struggled for possession of the gun. It fell out of Isbrant Bastians' hand into the shallow water. The sailor's hands went around his throat and closed. Then suddenly, inexplicably, they relaxed and slipped away. Behind the crumpling seaman, above a dripping sword, grinned the trim beard of Thomas de Villier.

HIP-DEEP in water, Jerome Cornelis drew his sword as he saw Webbye Hays wading out toward him. He moved back slowly. A satiric smile turned his lips. He had been expecting this.

The dueling ground he had chosen would give him a heavy advantage. He was half a foot taller than Hays. Water just up to his elbows would allow him to maneuver a blade fairly well. It would force the soldier to duel with the sea above his naked chest.

The marine corporal came on grimly. Sword held out rigidly to one side, he pressed against the undercurrents. Cornelis turned slowly sideways. This forced Hays into an equal depth.

Their swords touched with no word spoken.

The soldier fenced with his right arm at an angle, elbow out. It was awkward, as Cornelis had planned. But even depending upon his wrist alone, Webbye Hays was a dangerous antagonist. The two men exchanged thrusts with feet planted solidly on the ocean bed. Any sud-

den movement might bring a loss of balance.

The supercargo relied upon hacking strokes of his weapon. That and his longer reach made it difficult for the smaller man to use his more expert swordsmanship with deadly effect. Hays feinted. Cornelis brushed the stroke away. The soldier tried a sudden thrust at the tall man's face. Cornelis parried in prime.

Impatient, Webbye Hays recklessly attempted a high head cut. It fell short. But a fiery red line glowed along Cornelis' neck.

The tall man tightened his lips and his caution. Hays' deft strokes fell upon a hacking wall of steel. He began to look tired. He was breathing harder now, Cornelis exulted.

Suddenly the tall man saw his opportunity. Hays' sword lowered for a moment into the water, as though his arm were strained with effort. Cornelis lunged eagerly, his steel tip aimed for Webbye Hays' heart.

Hays' blade came up sharply from beneath the water.

In one sickening instant, Cornelis knew it had been a trap. But it was too late to recover. The soldier's sword flew up beneath his own with a hard, ringing sound. It was more blow than parry. Before Cornelis could tense the muscles of his hand, the hilt of his sword was ripped from his fingers.

The weapon spun high in the air over his shoulder.

In disbelieving horror, the supercargo waited for the death blow. It did not come. Webbye Hays said grimly, "Walk ashore, *mynheer*. Your reward is being postponed out of courtesy to Captain Pelsart, who would not forgive me for anticipating him."

If Cornelis had been able to swim well, he would have chanced an escape by diving beneath the water. As it was, he frowned bitterly and walked slowly with Webbye Hays' sword at his back.

The battle was still raging on the shore. Out of the corner of his eye the supercargo saw that close by, some of his men had managed to drag in one of the shallops and upright it. Wooter Loos was shouting something to the attackers. The mutineers, still dueling with Hays' men, backed toward the boat. Some sprang in.

As Cornelis reached shallow water, less than knee-high, he suddenly sprang forward and broke into a fast run. Hays, wading up to his thighs, splashed after him furiously. Cornelis caught the shallop as it moved out from the beach. Eager hands helped him in. Ten yards away, Webbye Hays halted in chagrin.

Mutineers who had missed the boat broke off their engagements with Hays' men and abruptly plunged into the water. They swam out to the waiting shallop and were taken aboard.

On shore, gasping but elated, the defenders watched the shallop pull away. Twenty-four mutineers had attacked. Only nine, including Jerome Cornelis, were leaving the island alive. And of these, some were wounded. The cost to Hays' company of ten had been a number of wounds and two dead—the young carpenter, Tewis Jans, and a French mercenary.

When Thomas de Villier described the engagement to Judith Bastians later, he was gallant enough to admit, "Our victory was purely a miracle—a miracle made possible by the wit of Corporal Hays. Without his plan, we should doubtless all have died. . . ."

When nine weary, disconsolate men beached their shallop upon Big Island, shocked faces heard their story. The mutineers who had remained behind were stunned. The women captives on the island, hearing the news, exchanged glances of joy and hope.

"Twenty-four men with arms," Lucretia de Jonge said scornfully, "against ten with swords! Are these your brave pirates who will win us a frigate and a castle in Barbary?"

"You will have all I promised, and more," Jerome Cornelis said wearily. "We still have more than twice their numbers, despite our misfortunes. But we will lose no more men to be rid of Hays and to get his water. There is a much more subtle way . . ."

"Perhaps stick pins in the marine corporal's image?"

"No, my sarcastic beauty. But I will stick them into his weakness. That weakness is his French mercenaries—soldiers who may be bought by the highest bidder."

She pondered the idea. "De Villier and

his men have used their swords against you in defense of Hays. What makes you sure you can persuade their loyalties with silver?"

"There is no Frenchman without his price. And a French mercenary?" He smiled grimly. "Aye, silver will buy Hays' death even if our arms will not. Loos! Wooter Loos!"

"Aye, Cornelis?"

"Find me the best swimmer in our company. Have him rowed silently most of the way to Little Island. He is then to slip out of the shallop and swim ashore, seeking out Thomas de Villier alone. He will give the Frenchman a message from me."

"And the message?"

"If de Villier and his soldiers will transfer their allegiance to me, bringing with them the dead body of Webbye Hays, I will make de Villier my next in command—and pay him and his men the sum of thirty thousand silver guilder!"

CHAPTER VIII

PRELUDE TO TREACHERY

CORNELIS did not sleep, waiting for the answer from Thomas de Villier. Like many a business man in Antwerp that night, he was taking mental inventory of his assets and liabilities. In less than a year he had risen from a drab apothecary in Haarlem to supercargo of an Indiaman. From this to Captain-General of a pirate crew.

He had exchanged a shrewish wife for the glamorous, exciting Lucretia de Jonge. He had shed the dull uniform of a ship's officer for the fabulous robes of an Indies Prince. The very feel of the fine silken fabric that enveloped him gave him a great sense of luxury and power.

He had wiped out almost an entire ship's company—persons of inconsequence who had stood between him and his ambitions. Not even the majesty of the General East India Company, or the Netherlands itself, had been able to prevail against him.

There was, however, still Webbye Hays and his band. This stubborn handful would have to be destroyed. With the carpenter boy dead, Cornelis' plans had changed. His men would now await the return of Captain Pelsart, to overwhelm and seize the sloop. None must live who could bear witness against Cornelis, or warn Pelsart away from Cornelis Island. There was also the water on Hays' island. And only Hays' death could wipe out the day's disgrace.

He was awake and musing when Wooter Loos, with some men behind, entered the guarded clearing where he and Lucretia spent the nights. Cornelis sat bolt upright when he saw who came with them.

"De Villier! You are courageous to venture here alone!"

The Frenchman bowed coolly. "Thirty thousand pieces of silver are worth any risk, *monsieur*. If you are in earnest."

"Aye!" Cornelis sprang to his feet. He put his hands upon his hips. "I admire your sword, de Villier. I offer you not only a fortune, but also the second in command here!"

"Let me be frank," de Villier said coldly. "I have no admiration for you, Cornelis, nor any desire to serve under you. It is my belief that you will either be hanged by Pelsart, or die at sea in piracy. Neither future attracts me overmuch. I prefer to remain on peaceful terms with legal authority."

"Then why did you come here?" Cornelis demanded angrily.

"Because I am not averse to half your offer—if it can be accomplished so that no guilt attaches to me. I have a plan which I will reveal to you, if you care to listen."

"If it concerns the death of Hays, I am listening."

The Frenchman nodded. "It is not the money alone that influences me," he said sharply. "There are other considerations which make your interest in his demise parallel to mine."

The girl, Cornelis reflected in amusement. "Your plan?"

"It begins with your payment to me of fifteen thousand guilder to prove good faith in this bargain."

"I will agree to that."

"Tomorrow you will send one of your men under a banner of truce to see the preacher, Isbrant Bastians. As a man of God, he will be more amenable to this

plan than perhaps Hays would. The preacher will be told that you are in dire need of water—which I imagine you are—and need it for the women you hold here."

Cornelis listened intently as the Frenchman filled in details of the plot. In exchange for permission to take water, Cornelis' emissary would offer chests of clothing for those on Little Island. And a promise that there should be no further warfare between the two islands. De Villier would join the preacher in persuading Webbye Hays to consent.

Word would be sent back to Cornelis that he would come to Little Island in a single shallop with only a bodyguard of five, bringing clothing and empty casks for water. Then he and Hays would sign a peace. But at de Villier's words, "I am glad that at last no more blood shall be shed," Cornelis' men would suddenly draw pistols and "compel" the mercenaries to drop their swords. Bastians and the two Dutch soldiers would have no choice but to follow suit. Webbye Hays could then be killed.

"I see." Cornelis' hollow cheeks puckered thoughtfully. "You really believe that Pelsart will come back, don't you, de Villier? You want to be sure *your* neck doesn't stretch on the yards!"

The soldier shrugged. "Your neck is already forfeit if they catch you, Cornelis. One more murder cannot make you hang any longer. Myself, I have no love of an outlaw's life. With thirty thousand guilder, I will have no need of employing my sword in the service of anyone. While you run the risks of piracy, I will be in France at ease in a chateau. *Chacun à son goût.* Each to his own taste, *monsieur.*"

"You're a shrewd fellow, de Villier, and you drive a hard bargain. But here is my hand on it. Loos! Count out fifteen thousand pieces of silver for the Frenchman."

Lucretia de Jonge, awake and listening, spoke suddenly to de Villier. "If there should be any treachery in this," she said in a barbed voice, "depend upon it the Captain-General's men will not rest until your veins are emptied."

De Villier smiled, sweeping the ground with his plumed hat. "Madame, as long as there are fifteen thousand more guilder to be gained, you need not fear treachery from a French mercenary. I will expect this second installment to be buried beneath one of the chests of clothing you bring, *monsieur.*"

"Our holy cause is joined!" Cornelis laughed. "Now you had best return before the sun comes up and you are missed. Oh, one thing more. Has it not occurred to you that I might not care to leave *any* on your island alive to bear witness against me?"

"*Mais certainement,*" the soldier murmured. "But you know full well that the bodies strewn on this and Middle Island are witness enough, should Pelsart return to find all dead but you and your men. In any event, if a shot is fired at any but Webbye Hays, we will quickly retrieve our swords. And I assure you, *monsieur,* the issue would be quite as bloody as it was this morning!"

"I like you, de Villier," the supercargo smiled, pinching his thin nose. "I regret that you do not see fit to join me. Perhaps, if you should change your mind later . . . ?"

EAST ST. LOUIS, Ill.—"I *mean* it when I ask for Calvert," says Max Adelman, insurance broker of this city. "I switched to Calvert long ago, because I like its better taste. And with me it's the taste that counts."

CALVERT RESERVE BLENDED WHISKEY—86.8 PROOF—65% GRAIN NEUTRAL SPIRITS. CALVERT DISTILLERS CORP., N. Y. C.

"Perhaps." With a deep bow to Lucretia de Jonge, the Frenchman backed away, then turned and followed Wooter Loos.

"This is dangerous," Lucretia said. "I am afraid, Jerome!"

His hand covered hers. "Retrieving swords," he smiled oddly, "is a difficult matter once they are on the ground. Tomorrow, my dear, will find none alive save those on Cornelis Island!"

ALL went as Thomas de Villier had proposed. "But I was told to instruct you," Cornelis' emissary reported, grinning, "this would be only a truce of mutual convenience, with no condonation of the wrongs you have committed. The judgment of these, Hays said, would be the business of Captain Pelsart."

When the shallop pulled out, loaded with chests and empty casks, Wooter Loos made each of the other four bodyguards surrender their pistols for examination. He checked the flash-pans with his finger for sand, and tested each trigger mechanism. There could be no mistakes this time, Jerome Cornelis warned tightly.

"I alone will fire at Webbye Hays. Loos, you will aim at de Villier—and you had better aim well! The rest of you will shoot first at the soldiers, after they have put down their swords. Then finish what targets are left."

"Shall we wait on the Frenchman's signal?"

"Aye! Everything will be exactly as he planned—until after I have killed the marine corporal. Then we will let them know our surprise." He smiled grimly. "Since de Villier will not cross over, he shall make a far more permanent allegiance."

"The girl?" Wooter Loos' eyes sought his searchingly.

Cornelis rubbed his chin. "Very well, spare her. Carry this business off well, Loos, and you will gain a wife . . ."

A tense silence greeted the shallop that bore the mutineers to Little Island. Waiting gravely on shore were the marine corporal, de Villier, the preacher, Judith Bastians, three French and two Dutch soldiers.

Cornelis stepped ashore. Beaching the boat, Wooter Loos and his four soldiers began to unload chests and empty casks. The supercargo fixed his deep-set eyes upon Webbye Hays, remembering the last time they had met. Then he went forward leisurely, one hand clasping the rolled parchment of his treaty.

"I am glad that we have decided to be friends, Hays," he said with a pleasant smile, "for there is mutual advantage in it. And I thank the preacher and Thomas de Villier for their good offices."

"We are not friends, Cornelis, and never could be," Hays said coolly. "We have accepted your proposal only because the women you hold captive need water, and because we need clothes. Let there be no hypocrisy about the meaning of this peace."

The supercargo shrugged lightly. His men came up behind him. Wooter Loos, at his left, faced de Villier. Cornelis snapped his fingers. One of his soldiers inverted an empty cask between the two leaders. Another placed upon it a quill and well of ink.

"Here is the peace treaty I have drawn." Cornelis unrolled the parchment and handed it to Webbye Hays. His hand returned to rest lightly upon the long butt of his snaphance dag. His glance fell casually, but expectantly, upon Thomas de Villier.

The marine corporal scanned the document carefully. "I trust you are sincere in this, Cornelis?" he said sharply.

The tall man smiled. Suddenly his smile froze. Without warning, Webbye Hays' men threw themselves upon the mutineers with drawn swords. Hays himself caught the supercargo by the neck and flung him to the sand, seizing Cornelis' pistol as he did so.

Wooter Loos was too fast for de Villier. The Frenchman's sword ripped the pistol from the boatswain's hand, but Loos escaped the deadly thrust. He raced furiously back to the beach. Swiftly pushing the nose of the shallop into the water, he leaped in, seized the oars and rowed desperately.

De Villier splashed into the sea after him. But his sword could only touch the stern of the boat. And then Loos was gone.

On shore each of the four bodyguards was quickly slain. None were given the

chance to grasp the pistols tucked at their waists. Jerome Cornelis wrestled bitterly beneath Webbye Hays, who held his wrists pinned firmly to the sand.

"You treacherous scum!" the supercargo screamed. "Is this how you respect a flag of truce and your word of honor?"

"Honor!" Hays panted scornfully. "We should all be dead this moment if we had relied on your precious honor!"

"You lie! That's a vicious lie!"

"Do you call me a liar, you wretched scoundrel?" de Villier demanded coolly. "Let him go, Hays. He shall answer to me!"

"You'll pay for this treachery, de Villier!" Cornelis swore. "If I do not live to kill you, my men will!"

"You shall live, Cornelis," Hays said grimly, "to answer for your heinous crimes to Captain Pelsart!"

Hays' soldiers slipped ropes around the tall man's legs and body as the marine corporal held him in an iron grip. The supercargo's lips curled. "You're very brave, Corporal. But you would be infinitely less so if we were face to face, unarmed!"

Hays sprang up. He motioned to the soldiers to leave Jerome Cornelis unbound. Then he unbuckled his baldric and tossed it aside. "Stand up," he said. "You have given me an excellent idea."

The supercargo sprang to his feet, smiling tightly. Although he was slender, his arms were long and powerful. The others on the shore moved back to make room. Judith Bastians plucked anxiously at the scalloped sleeve of Thomas de Villier.

"Stop them!" she whispered. "There is no need for Corporal Hays to subject himself to this. Cornelis is our prisoner!"

De Villier stared at her ruefully, understanding in his eyes. She colored and looked away. Her father shook his bald head.

"Reserve your pity for Jerome Cornelis," he said grimly. Then he raised his eyes. "If it please the Lord."

The supercargo advanced slowly, arms held out before him. Hays stood squarely, with feet planted apart, waiting. Cornelis charged. He hurled a clenched fist at the soldier's jaw. Caught off guard, the shorter man took a blow on the side of his face. It staggered him backward. Cornelis sprang after him like a panther. His knee lifted brutally, but missed. Then his long arms reached for Hays' throat. The corporal caught the out-thrust wrists. Twisting one over the other, he wrenched Cornelis off balance and hurled him heavily to the sand.

The thrown man whirled, avoiding Hays' leap. As both men gained their feet, Cornelis shot his leg out in a powerful kick. Hays stepped inside the attack. His left fist slammed up hard against the tall man's chin. Cornelis lurched backward, recovering in time to block a second blow. Then he smashed his fist from the side against the small of the soldier's neck.

Webbye Hays gasped in pain. Cornelis swiftly followed his advantage with a hard punch to the stomach. Breathing hard, Hays retreated as well as he could before the sledgehammer blows of the taller man's long arms. A large welt appeared under his left eye. Blood trickled suddenly from a corner of his mouth. He withstood the storm of Cornelis' attack without offering a single blow in return. The tall man pressed him back savagely.

Thomas de Villier groaned. He slid his sword restlessly up and down in its scabbard. Judith Bastians turned away.

Cornelis threw a blow that fell short. He was breathing more heavily now, worn by the exertion of his attack. His lean face was twisted with a burning purpose. Feeling his arms tire, he let them drop for a moment. He lunged at Hays with a low kick.

The smaller man suddenly dropped his guard. Seizing the supercargo's outstretched foot, he yanked. Cornelis went down, but sprang up instantly, cursing. He moved in again to attack.

Webbye Hays began to work his arms. They seemed to bounce on tireless coiled springs. He slammed blow after blow into Cornelis' face as the taller man threshed the air in bewilderment and rage. Hays' rapid fists closed one eye in the lean face.

Relentlessly, the blows fell upon the stunned and reeling supercargo. His heels dug backward into the sand as he tried to fend off the fists that flew at him mercilessly. Barely able to see out of his puffed eyes, he opened his mouth to cry out.

Whatever the cry, the company on the island did not hear it.

Webbye Hays' fist cracked hard against his jawbone. The blow jolted Cornelis' long black hair, making it dance straight up.

Hays followed up with a second fierce blow that encountered only air. Its target was resting limply on the beach.

"*Mon Dieu!*" exclaimed Thomas de Villier in exasperation. He stared at the bruised and bleeding face of Webbye Hays. "I do not understand you Dutch! To endure such barbarities—when there are such civilized weapons as swords!"

LUCRETIA DE JONGE listened wordlessly as Wooter Loos told her what had happened. Throwing back her magnificent head, she stared angrily out to sea. "The fool! I warned him to beware of treachery! Are you sure they have not killed him?"

"From what I saw as I escaped," the boatswain said dourly, "they mean to hold him prisoner."

Her black eyes were pools of determination. "Attack at once! Take as many men with you as both shallops will hold!"

Sharp fingernails digging into her palms, she watched the boats row off once more. She felt uneasier than her bold manner had implied. Without Cornelis, her position on the island was precarious. As a woman it would only be a matter of time, she knew, before she would be looked upon as either obstacle or prize.

She was suddenly aware of a soft, half-crazed voice in her ear. "They've taken *your* man, haven't they?"

Lucretia wheeled. The woman was one of the wives taken from Middle Island. She was smiling, and her eyes were unnaturally wide.

"Oh, I know!" she giggled. "And I'm glad! I'm *very* glad!"

Lucretia de Jonge slapped her sharply across the mouth twice.

The woman still smiled. Her hand reached inside her overdress. When it came out again, it held a jeweled dagger. She raised it quickly and struck it into Lucretia's heart.

The green of Lucretia's quilted silk robe stained a slow purple.

She fell. The other woman giggled uncontrollably.

WOOTER LOOS' men had rowed a mile or more when one of the sailors stood up in the shallop.

"Look! *Look!*"

Oars idling, the men in both boats stared in the direction the sailor pointed. The sight he saw dismayed Wooter Loos.

"It—it's the *Dordrecht!*" another sailor whispered in awe. The *Dordrecht* was one of the *Batavia's* sister ships that had been lost in the storm. "I recognize the cut of her rigging!"

"Damn the devils in hell!" Another mutineer spat in disgust. "Now we're in for it, lads, and that's the truth. Loos—what are we to do?"

The boatswain's narrow eyes watched the distant ship until he was positive it was headed toward the Abroholos. "Pelsart must be on her," he said dourly, "else she would not be coming here."

"Aye!" a sailor growled. "And her yardarms will swing the lot of us nicely! We had better turn out to sea and run for it!"

Murmurs of approval came from the apprehensive mutineers.

"No!" Loos said flatly. "There is a better plan—one cut to our purposes. Neither Pelsart nor any aboard the *Dordrecht* can know what has happened here. If we were to meet them at sea, they would take us on board with affection. We are simply out in the shallops in search of fish or water to bring back to the islands!"

"By God!" exclaimed a sailor. "You have it, Loos!"

"Aye! Taking them completely by surprise when we board, we can swiftly seize the ship. What do you say, men? Shall we seize the *Dordrecht* and make her our own?"

The faces of the men in the boats glowed with new hope and expectation. As one man they cheered and shouted "Aye!"

"By God," shouted one overjoyed mutineer, "this is the very chance we have been waiting for! With the *Dordrecht* in our hands, we will no longer be mutineers but pirates, with our own ship!"

"And with the *Dordrecht's* guns," Loos added grimly, "we can blow Little Island to pieces until Hays agrees to surrender the Captain-General. Change course for the *Dordrecht!*"

CHAPTER IX

BARBARY'S END

ISBRANT BASTIANS was the first on Little Island to see the full rigging of the Indiaman. He shouted excitedly to the others. They flocked beside him and stared eagerly to sea.

"God be praised!" the preacher breathed. "Captain Pelsart has found the *Dordrecht*. We shall see Amsterdam again!"

Jerome Cornelis, his face swollen and discolored, lay on the ground, securely roped. He heard the news in grim silence. But he kept his eyes fixed upon bobbing dots in the sea between the islands. Then he saw the distant shallops change course sharply and head out into the open sea. His fingers curled exultantly.

He understood their turn of purpose. If all went well, he would yet be master of a pirate vessel and an emperor of the sea!

He felt a rich affection for Wooter Loos.

De Villier threw the bound man an ironic smile. "Here come your floating gallows, *monsieur!* I shall cheerfully pay fifteen thousand guilder to Captain Pelsart for the privilege of being one to haul you to the yardarms!"

Cornelis burst into laughter. Webbye Hays suddenly felt uneasy. "Do you find that idea especially amusing?" he asked sharply.

"Aye," the supercargo replied easily. "Most amusing."

"You have a strange humor, Cornelis!"

"I hope you will see the humor in it, too, Corporal. Since there is little else you can do about it under the circumstances."

"This man is mad!" de Villier exclaimed. "He talks as if the coming of the *Dordrecht* were our tragedy, rather than his!"

"Aye, and so it is, my treacherous friend. For if you will look to the east, you will see Wooter Loos and my men in shallops heading out to meet the *Dordrecht* at sea!"

"Mon Dieu!" The Frenchman was dismayed. "He is telling the truth! They mean to take the ship by surprise!"

The supercargo laughed in almost hysterical relief. "Naturally! Our dear captain will take them aboard as honest, Godfearing castaways—and he will quickly regret it! *Then* who do you think will be swinging from the yardarms, Thomas de Villier?"

Wooter Loos' shallops had too great a lead to foster any false hopes of outdistancing them to the *Dordrecht*. Oars against oars, any boat from Little Island was doomed to failure. If there were some way of flying through the sea faster . . .

"De Villier!" Webbye Hays snapped. "Open one of the chests this villain brought with him, and bring the largest robe to shore quickly! *Mynheer* Bastians, find as much rope as you can and bring it at once to the beach!"

Whipping out a small knife, he slashed and cut a sturdy branch, stripping it of leaves. Then he cut two stout, shorter pieces. Carrying these, he beckoned to one of the Dutch ensigns to follow and raced off toward one of the shallops. They swiftly launched the boat and pointed her nose to sea.

Hays took the robe and rope brought by de Villier and the preacher, and tossed these into the shallop along with his branches. Then he motioned the Frenchman and Dutch ensign to get in.

He leaped in after them. "Pull away!" he shouted tensely.

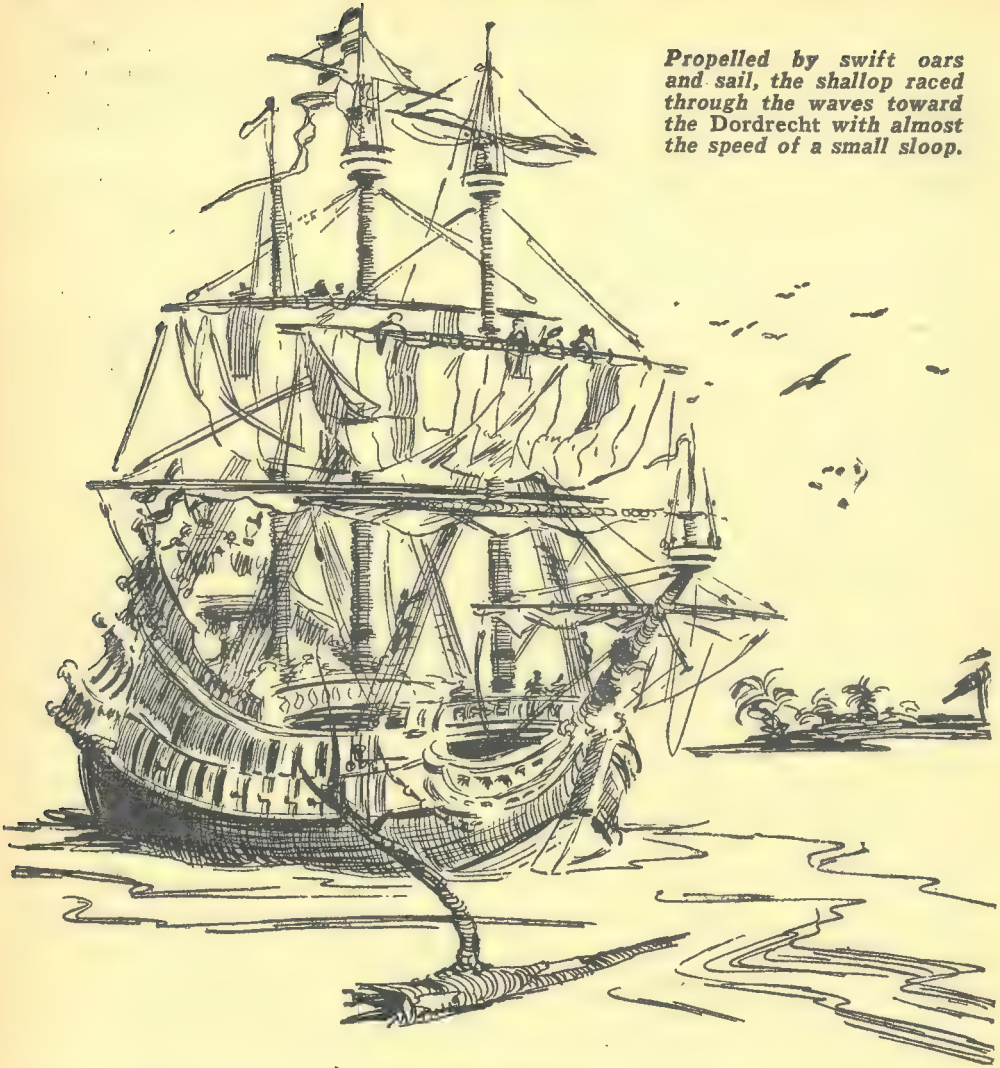
De Villier and the ensign bent over the oars. The shallop tossed easily over small waves. Webbye Hays labored with the rope, branches and robe, glancing up to ascertain Wooter Loos' position. The mutineers were a mile further out to sea toward the advancing full-rigger. The wind blew strongly from the Abroholos.

Working as swiftly as his fingers would function, Hays fastened one short branch onto the long one in a cross. Then he roped the other short branch firmly about a foot from the bottom, parallel to the top cross-piece. Ripping the scarlet robe at the seam, he attached one side tightly to the top branch. Then he stretched the satin cloth as tautly as he could, fastening it to the bottom.

"A sail!" de Villier gasped in wonder.

"Such as it is," Hays nodded. "Keep those oars splashing! It is no t'gallant-sail, and we will need every ounce of speed!"

He stretched prone at the bow, to keep



Propelled by swift oars and sail, the shallop raced through the waves toward the Dordrecht *with almost the speed of a small sloop.*

his body out of the wind's path. Reaching out his arms, he braced the crude sail upright from beneath against the shallop's bow.

The fast-blowing westerly puffed out the crimson robe. Their work suddenly lighter, the two men at the oars pulled more swiftly.

Hays prayed that the wind would blow on course. He was barely conscious of the ache in his shoulders, from pressing firmly against the improvised mast. The boat was cutting water more sharply now. Peering over the bow, Hays saw that the gap between their shallop, approaching the starboard side of the full-rigger, and those of Wooter Loos at larboard, was slowly dwindling.

"Faster! Faster!" he urged the men sweating at the oars.

De Villier and the ensign quickened stroke until they were gasping. Propelled by swift oars and sail, the shallop raced through the waves toward the *Dordrecht* with almost the speed of a small sloop. Hays strained to hold the tree mast firmly against the unrelenting pressure of the westerly.

The *Dordrecht,* looming larger every moment, was holding a course between Hays' shallop and Loos' two. Now the marine corporal could see sailors scram-

bling up the shrouds, preparing to furl sails. Pelsart could undoubtedly see the shallops, and was planning to anchor. He would be wary about approaching too close to the treacherous archipelago that had already cost him his own ship.

Steadily, but all too slowly, the shallop with the red satin sail forged through the seas before the wind. Loos' boats were still ahead, less than half a mile from the full-rigger. The great ship slackened speed as topsails came down.

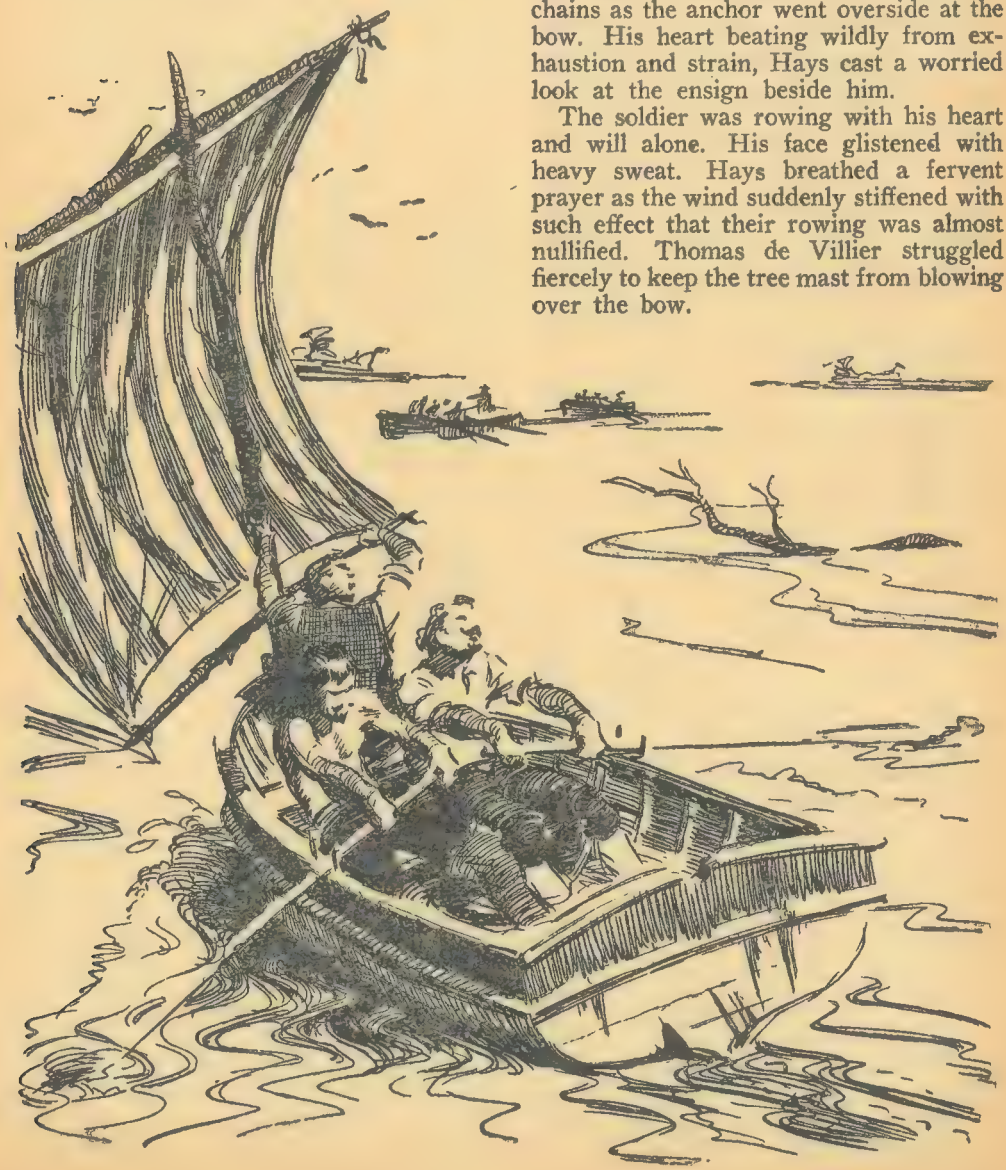
Webbye Hays' heart sank as he saw Thomas de Villier, his face bathed in perspiration, keel over his oar. He called to the Frenchman to take his place at the bow. De Villier did so with a gasp of relief, as Hays slid on the seat beside the ensign.

"Can you hold out?" he asked grimly.

"I must!" the Dutch soldier panted.

The *Dordrecht's* canvas was down now. She was idling on the tossing sea, waiting for the shallops to draw beside her. Hays' boat was close enough to hear the clank of chains as the anchor went overside at the bow. His heart beating wildly from exhaustion and strain, Hays cast a worried look at the ensign beside him.

The soldier was rowing with his heart and will alone. His face glistened with heavy sweat. Hays breathed a fervent prayer as the wind suddenly stiffened with such effect that their rowing was almost nullified. Thomas de Villier struggled fiercely to keep the tree mast from blowing over the bow.



The improvised sloop passed suddenly along the starboard bow of the *Dordrecht*. The full-rigger blotted out the view of Wooter Loos' shallops which had approached a trifle widely, and were now turning in at the larboard . . .

CAPTAIN Francis Pelsart leaned over the larboard rail of the half-deck. He stared down at the two boats which bobbed alongside of the anchored *Dordrecht*.

"Please take us aboard quickly, sir!" Wooter Loos urged loudly, standing up in the bow of his shallop. "We are almost dying of thirst, as are all on the islands! You are just in time!"

"You are not badly clothed, I notice," Pelsart called down. "Since when do sailors and soldiers wear rich silks?"

"Many of us lost what clothes we had in the wreck and storm," Loos shouted back, after a moment's hesitation. "The sun is crucifying upon naked flesh—our need was desperate!"

"A reasonable answer, soldier. But what am I to make of the arms your men bear, which can only have come from the Company's chests? What need have castaways for pistols?"

"Black savages, sir! We beat off two attacks, but we have now armed every man for the defense of the entire company—"

"You may come aboard," Captain Pelsart shouted down.

The faces of Wooter Loos and his men, drawn and anxious at the captain's sharp questioning, brightened with joy. Two rope ladders were lowered from the half-deck rail. Loos set his foot in a rung and prepared to climb. Others in the shallop stood up to follow him.

"One moment," Francis Pelsart called out coolly. "You may come aboard—but first cast all arms into the sea."

Wooter Loos blanched. "But, sir! We may need them yet to help the passengers and crew, if the blacks attack again—"

"You will do as I order, boatswain," Pelsart said grimly. "Or would you all prefer to sink where you are?"

At either side of him a gunner suddenly appeared, holding aloft a cannon-ball. Dropped, the heavy missiles would smash large holes in the shallops and sink them quickly.

Loos swallow hard, in an agony of indecision.

Then he saw two faces appear beside the captain's, and the heart went out of him abruptly. One was the stern, square face of Webbye Hays; the other, the grinning visage of Thomas de Villier. He knew that further protestations were futile.

Two oars and a crude, ridiculous sail had ended the hopes and career of Captain-General Jerome Cornelis and his pirates without a ship. The mutineers threw their arms into the sea glumly, and were admitted up the ladder one by one.

The armorer was ready with his chains.

THE trial took place on board the *Dordrecht*, three days later, after there had been sufficient time to persuade mutineers, who were reluctant to confess, by means of the rack. One of these was Jerome Cornelis. No man, he declared indignantly, could say that his hand had wielded a weapon which had taken a life. He had been motivated in what he had done, he swore, only by his zeal to do his duty as supercargo, preserving as much of the Company's properties as possible. It required three trips to the rack to wring a full confession from him.

When Francis Pelsart pronounced his sentence, the gaunt man stood sullen and erect, hardly hearing the words. He was thinking of the woman they had told him was dead—his Queen, Lucretia de Jonge. He wondered whether they should meet again, in the unknown place to which he was going . . .

"Jerome Cornelis of Haarlem, chemist, having been second merchant of the vessel *Batavia*, shall, after having been baptized according to his request, on Monday the 17th of July, 1629, be taken to Big Island, to the place where justice will be done. There, first both his hands will be cut off, and he will next be punished with the cord at the gallows where erected, and so done to death. His goods, money, gold, silver, monthly wages and other pretensions that he might have to make in India, will be confiscated on behalf of our masters, the General East India Company."

The boatswain, Wooter Loos, was condemned to hang beside him, a sentence also meted out to all mutineers but three. One was freed on the word of the others that he had killed no person. Two, because of extreme youth, were sentenced to be put ashore and left to their own devices upon the barren mainland of the new Austral land to the east.

The trial court also pronounced that Webbye Hays of Winnhooten, for bravery and loyalty, would be appointed to the rank of sergeant, with the pay of eighteen guilder a month. Thomas de Villier, for his courage and services, was made a marine corporal, with the pay of fifteen guilder a month.

A faint, wry smile curved the handsome mustache of the French mercenary. He thought of the fifteen thousand silver guilder he had turned over to Captain Pelsart. The Dutch!

"God is avenged," said Isbrant Bastians with deep satisfaction.

A SAILOR set tinder to the *Dordrecht's* small deck gun. Heaving shoulders were put to the capstan, and anchor was weighed. Sailors scrambled aloft to put on canvas.

Webbye Hays found Judith Bastians at the half-deck rail. He hesitated a moment, his figure stiff and tense. Then he coughed. She turned around, surprise in her eyes.

"Miss Bastians," he frowned. His palms were sweaty. "There are things I had wished to say to you before this."

"Indeed?" His heart skipped. She was smiling at him.

"My manner—perhaps—I have been—well, brusque. I did not mean to be. It is just that I am a soldier and—" He stopped as his voice tightened. Feeling miserable and lost, he forced himself to speak on. "I—I wish to apologize."

She let her fingers fall lightly on his hand. "It is I who should apologize, Sergeant. I am deeply grateful to you, as are all of the company who are fortunate enough to be alive."

His face burned. Swallowing, he averted his eyes. "I had no right to ask while we were castaways on that miserable island —" he faltered. His voice changed from a croak to a rasping whisper. "Miss Bastians," he said desperately, "would you consent to becoming my wife?"

The girl looked at him softly, sadly. When she found her voice, she said, "Believe me, sir, you honor me, far more than I deserve. But—"

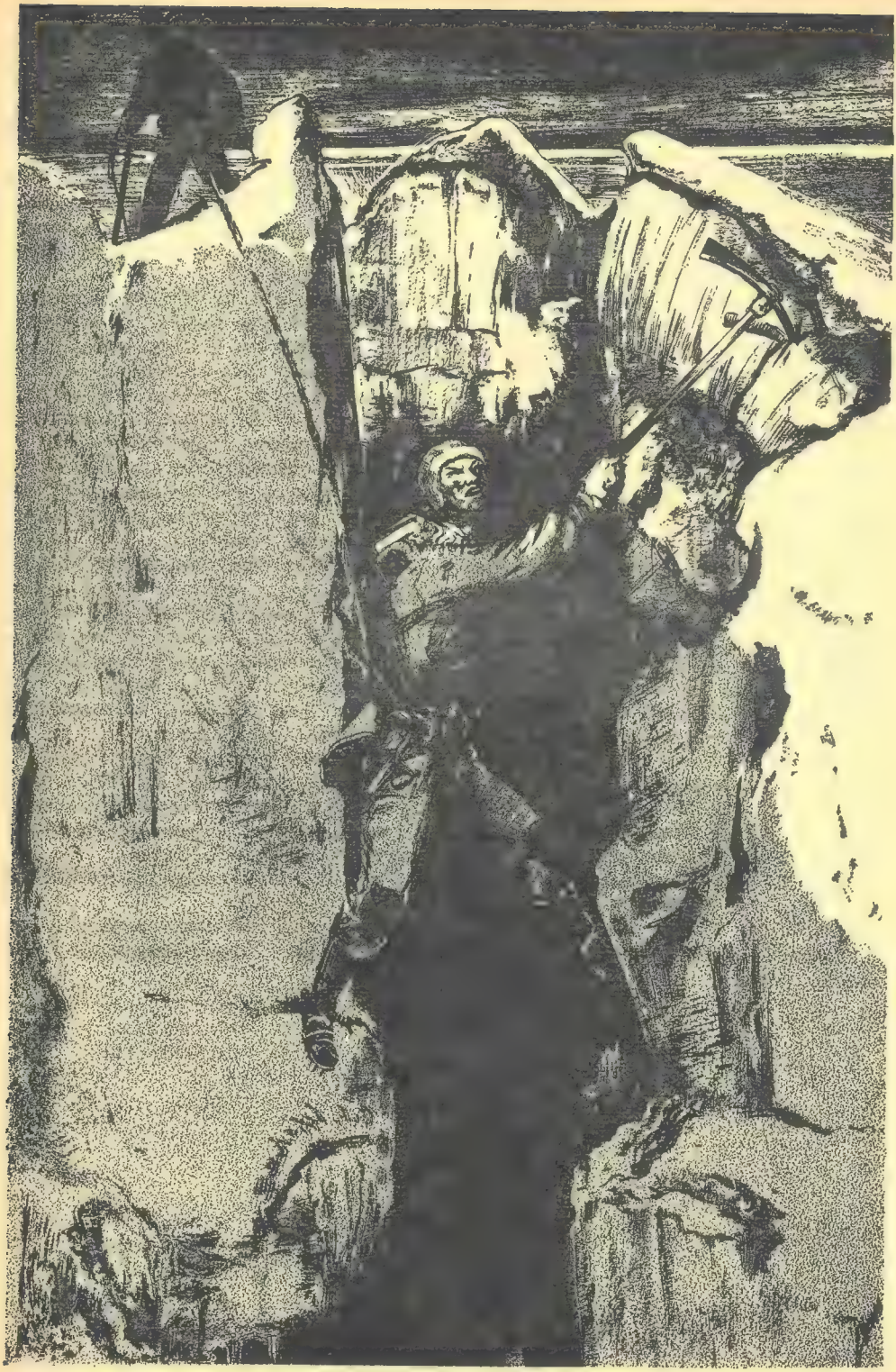
"Tiens!" a silken voice laughed behind Webbye Hays. "And how does a marine corporal address a sergeant? Do I still say 'Sir'?" De Villier's smile slowly disappeared as he looked astutely from Webbye Hays to the girl. He wet his lips.

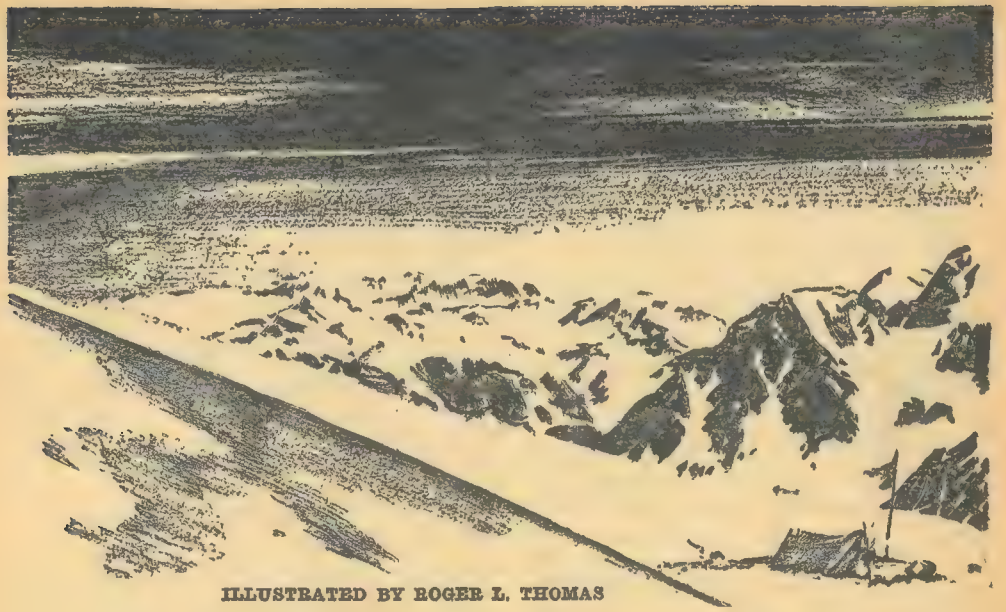
"A thousand pardons!" he murmured. "I am intruding—"

"No," said Webbye Hays wryly. "I am. My congratulations, de Villier. This time it is my sword which is sticking in a tree. I yield, glad you are the victor. I wish you both joyful days."

Thomas de Villier stared at Judith Bastians incredulously.

She colored and looked away over the rail at the dwindling islands of the Abroholos.





ILLUSTRATED BY ROGER L. THOMAS

SNOW BLIND

By
HAL G. EVARTS

PASSANG, the Sherpa guide, finished chopping the last step in the ice and climbed wearily onto solid rock. Braced against his axe, he shoved back his goggles and wiped the sweat from his face. He saw the summit of Karkori not five hundred feet above, a wicked white dazzle in the mid-afternoon sun, and in the distance, topping the vast Himalayan wall, Everest itself. He stared off at the peak a moment and brought his mind back to the Americans waiting below.

Too much ice, he could tell at a glance. The short fat one was tiring fast and the younger man, the quick-tempered one named Crail, lacked sufficient experience to anchor. They could make it, Passang knew, by cutting more steps, but that would leave no margin of safety for the descent to camp before dark; the Americans were tourists not climbers.

Having decided to turn back, he knocked the snow from his crampon spikes and started down reluctantly. The peak was unimportant; other tourists had climbed it. He himself had climbed it. But the Americans would be disappointed. They might not pay him the bonus at which they had hinted. As desperately as Passang Buri wanted a bonus he could not force himself to risk the final ascent.

It was then he heard the scream.

The sound shattered around him, a shrill piercing screech of terror, sharp as a whistle blast, then ceased abruptly. For a second or two the vibrations seemed to quiver in the thin still air, fading to complete and final silence.

His reaction was instinctive. Moving deliberately, he backed down the steps two

Signaling Crail to pay out the line, Passang inched ahead—below him space yawned into darkness.

at a time, supported by his rope and axe, down across the face of the ridge toward the cornice that cut off his view of the Americans. He did not have to speculate. He knew; one or the other, or both, had slipped.

He had been less than eager to guide them in the first place, not so late in the season. But when they offered double wages, and mentioned extra pay, he had accepted, of course. If ever his son was to climb again he must have money for the operation, a great deal of money. He could not afford to refuse rich Americans. But now—

As he rounded the corner his stomach contracted with sudden sour violence. The younger man, Crail, was crouched on all fours halfway down the steep dangerous slope, clinging by one hand to his axe, retching into the snow. Of his companion, Danby, there was no sign. For an instant Passang held the hope that Danby was safe on the ledge below, and then he saw the skid marks on the ice, the faint but unmistakable pattern of scratches that led straight to a dropoff, fifty feet beneath him.

SLIDING down beside Crail, he drove the prong of his axe into a crack, took two turns around the head with his line and thrust the end into the American's hand. Crail raised his head and peered up at Passang with pale bloodshot eyes. A tremor shook his shoulders. "Danby!" he breathed. "God—"

"Belay me!" Crail stared uncomprehendingly. "Anchor yourself," Passang said. "I'm going down for a look."

It was a gesture, nothing more. Danby was gone. By what miracle Crail had been spared he did not yet understand. He was still too stunned to reconstruct the accident in his mind. He could think only of a fat middle-aged man sliding to his death, spinning off into space and dropping thousands of feet to the glacier below. That Crail, who had witnessed the fall, should be on the verge of hysteria, was natural. And yet, as Passang slithered down over the ice on his belly, lowering himself by the rope, some detail of the scene, some blurred fragmentary impression, registered on the screen of his consciousness.

A yard or so from the edge he stopped. He could see over the lip, down to the neve far below, on to the mass of the glacier where they had crossed that morning, and the tiny speck of their tent against the rocks on the opposite side. He studied the terrain for some while, then let out a long breath and hauled himself back up beside Crail, filled with sick and empty futility.

The American straightened and rubbed his hand over his mouth. He stood nearly a head taller than Passang, lean and bony-faced, thin-lipped, with a pinched bluish look around the eyes. In a whisper he said, "Is he —?"

Passang nodded. He was a stocky brown-skinned man of thirty-eight, with silver hair over the temples and a face seamed by constant wind and snowglare. His dark eyes carried the shadow of tragedy now, a tragedy for which he was, in part at least, responsible. For twenty years he had been climbing. In his prime he had portered for the great ones, the Everest expeditions, and later, after his wind and legs failed, for tourists, but in all that time he had never lost a man. It was not of himself he thought now, however, but of the boy, Talai, hobbling around the Darjeeling streets on crutches, and of the bonus. Would Crail pay him, after this?"

"Did you see him—down there?" Crail said. "The body—"

"No," Passang said. "No, we won't find him." He coiled in his rope, surprised that his hands were trembling. For the moment he was not even curious how this thing had happened. He knew he would relive the past half hour as long as he lived, and had no wish to prolong it. "We'll start whenever you're ready, sir."

"I'll be all right in a minute." Some color had returned to Crail's cheeks and his voice was steadier. "You mean," he said slowly, "his body won't be found?"

Passang made his tone purposefully matter-of-fact, to soothe the man. "I doubt it. Not this year."

Crail looked up sharply. "You sure of that?"

Passang shrugged to cover his annoyance; Crail's curiosity seeming somehow indecent to him. Danby was dead. A week would pass before a search party could organize and reach the base of Karkori. By

then the monsoon would have broken, blanketing everything with snow. "I think he fell in an avalanche track," he said. "Maybe never."

"Poor old Dan." Crail shook his head. "Just one slip—"

Passang turned away, anxious to leave this place before Crail lost his nerve altogether. He pitied the man, but he could not find warmth in him, so for that reason he did not ask the obvious question. He said simply, "God was with you."

"It was Dan's idea," Crail said. "Like a damn fool I agreed. If we'd stayed where you told us—well, he'd be here now."

Passang frowned. Crail, not Danby, had been the one to object when Passang left them behind, roped and secure on the ledge, while he climbed ahead to cut a path. Crail had been impatient to push on to the summit regardless. But that would come out at the inquiry later. His one purpose now was to get Crail down off the mountain to safety. He said, "It's getting late, sir."

Checking the fastener on his belt, he motioned Crail to rope on behind. Carefully he worked down, following the footholds he had cut less than an hour before, pausing every few feet to take up the slack between himself and Crail, until he reached firm footing. On the ledge he noticed an empty cigarette pack, a booklet of matches, the imprints in the snow where the two men had sat waiting. Thinking of his own son, he said, "Did he have children?"

"Two boys, back in the States." And after a pause Crail added, "I guess the U. S. Consul will handle the details."

Passang did not answer, his mind slipping back to that day five months before when he had been climbing with Talai, instructing him. The boy was strong and agile for his fifteen years, with the love of mountains in his blood; he would be better than his father, Passang had boasted proudly. And then the slip on the rocks, the sickening crack of bone, a multiple fracture. For weeks the boy had lain in the mission hospital, the heavy weights on his legs, while Passang waited in a vacuum of bitterness and despair.

He had not believed the doctor's final verdict: the right leg two inches shorter than the left, a partial cripple for life. Yes, there were surgeons in the great hospitals of Calcutta, five hundred miles away, who might perform miracles of bone grafting, but miracles were expensive. Such an operation was only for those of wealth, not for a poor native from the hills, not even for an Everest Tiger.

So Passang had driven himself, day and night, grudging each rupee he spent for food, haunted by the knowledge in Talai's eyes that he must live within the shadow of the peaks, but never climb again; driven himself with a grimness he would not have thought possible, to keep alive in the boy a spark of hope. For if that spark died, Passang knew, something in Talai would die with it.

"THE local authorities?" Crail was saying now. "What about them?"

Passang glanced up, vaguely disturbed by the question. "The Darjeeling police," he said, "investigate and make a report."

"Oh?" Crail's eyes met his and shifted away. "Dan and I were great friends, you

OYSTERMAN FINDS REAL PEARL!

AMAGANSETT, N. Y.—Capt. Ted Lester has discovered a gem among whiskies. "It's Calvert Reserve," he says, "and the day I first tasted it, I switched to Calvert's smoother taste. It's a real find!"

CALVERT RESERVE BLENDED WHISKEY—86.8 PROOF—65% GRAIN NEUTRAL SPIRITS. CALVERT DISTILLERS CORP., N.Y.C.

know. Planned this trip together for a long time. It's an awful jolt. I—I—" He cleared his throat. "Better pull myself together and get the story straight."

Passang grunted. Whatever the story, there would be publicity. A rich American falling to his death was news. The Darjeeling bazaar would hum with the name of Passang Buri, Everest Tiger, now grown old and careless. Other tourists in other years might no longer come to him. This might be his last chance to earn a large sum quickly. He realized this and yet he did not condemn the American. He himself had been at fault in leaving the two men alone.

"Like I told you," Crail said, "Dan got restless sitting here. Said we might as well follow you, since the steps were cut, instead of losing any more time. He was hell-bent to make the top. It looked easy so we started up after you, with me in the lead and Dan about twenty feet behind on the rope. About halfway up he let out a yell. There was a terrific jerk. I tried to dig in—"

Passang scarcely heard him. He wondered how much Crail would pay him, ashamed that he should have to think of money at such a time. If it were not for the money, he thought, and the need that obligated him— Because of it he could say nothing.

"And then," Crail went on, "it broke."

Passang blinked. "It broke?"

"Must have," Crail said. "Dan lost his footing and it snapped under the strain. He was a big man, over two hundred pounds. I couldn't see, of course. His weight pulled me flat on my face. But that's the only way it figures."

"It broke?" Passang said incredulously. "My rope?"

"Probably," Crail said, "it was flawed."

Passang ran his fingers over the nylon line that tied him to Crail. Always he carried two, a hundred feet each. Now one was missing, the one Danby had carried with him over the edge. He had tested them both the previous night. In all his experience he had never known of a rope to break under such conditions. "The stub," he said. "The end that was fastened to you. Where is it?"

"Oh that." Crail made a gesture with his shoulders. "I threw it away."

The detail came back to Passang in a rush, confirming his earlier feel of something not quite right. He had seen a rope end, perhaps six feet long, trailing from Crail's belt. Now that too was missing.

"Over the drop," Crail said. "It broke off short. No good to anybody."

But Passang was already off the ledge, scrambling up the steps. Fresh sweat broke out on him as he searched along the slope. He did not expect to find it, he half hoped that he would not find it, yet somehow knowing that he must. Then, behind a hummock, he caught the wink of a metal carabiner and a length of half-inch line, almost invisible against the ice. Even before he touched it he saw one end had been cut neatly, squarely, as though by an axe.

Below him Crail called out something indistinguishable. A chill brushed the base of his spine. Leave it here, he thought. No one will know. This is white man trouble, none of your concern. This will only bring more trouble, bad trouble. But some impulse prompted him to snatch it up and shove it inside his jacket. Cautiously he climbed down to the ledge again.

Watching him closely, Crail said, "Any luck?"

Passang shook his head.

"What's the idea?"

Passang hesitated. He dared not antagonize the American, nor arouse his suspicion, not with a dangerous descent before them. They were dependent on each other, at least until they crossed the glacier. "New rope," he said, "costs money."

Crail's mouth relaxed. "I'll buy you another one. Don't worry."

Passang swung into the lead, moving down the sharp pitch of the ridge crest. It had taken seven hours to climb this far; normally they could make the descent in three. There would be one night in camp and the better part of another day to reach the first village. The prospect of twenty-four hours alone with Crail loomed before him.

Crail had lied. That much he knew, the rest of it, the cause of it, he tried to block from his mind, concentrating on the mechanics of the descent. It was safer not to know. After all, he was only a guide, hired by the day to haul tourists up and down mountains. Perhaps there was an explanation for the cut rope. He would

accept the bonus and keep his opinions to himself. He was no judge.

A chill late afternoon wind had sprung up and the ice was purple in shadow. Angling down off the ridge, they came to the neve. The surface had melted under the day's sun, not yet refrozen, and Passang walked out on it gingerly, testing each step. Behind him Crail called, "How about a glissade?"

Over his shoulder Passang said, "Too soft."

Crail laughed. "You don't take any chances, do you?"

Passang plowed on through the snow, intent on his footwork. Occasionally he stopped to catch his breath and glance back at Crail. It was slow laborious going and he felt a surge of anger at this American who was in such a hurry, who would risk life to gain a few minutes. He was young and strong with a fair knowledge of snow techniques, but lacking the sharp clean edge of discipline necessary to any really good climber. Even death had failed to teach him.

WHEN they reached the rocks on the far side Passang sank down and loosened his crampon straps. The muscles of his legs ached and a dull pain throbbed behind his eyeballs. He could still see the distant tip of Everest, crimson in the sun, a sight that momentarily relieved his depression. Someday another expedition would come. He himself was too old, but Talai might be among the first to reach God's Window on the World.

"The glacier?" Crail said. "Can't we cut straight across?"

"No," Passang said. "Too many crevasses and islands. We will cross farther down."

Crail shrugged and squatted down beside him. "That police report you mentioned: Just a formality, I suppose?"

"They will ask questions, if that's what you mean."

"I've been thinking," Crail said. "It might be better if there were two witnesses, instead of one. Actually you saw as much as I did."

"I saw nothing," Passang said. "I was behind a cornice."

Crail pulled out a cigarette, lighted it and flicked away the match, end over end into space. Peering at Passang through the smoke, he said. "That's the first question they'll ask: Why? Why did you leave us alone? No matter what I tell them it's bound to look like negligence on your part. This way you'll be in the clear."

Passang stared at him open-mouthed. "What way?"

"Let's face it. A lot of wild talk won't help either of us. We're in this together." Crail studied the end of this cigarette, frowning. "Why not tell our story straight, the way it happened, with one switch: we both saw him fall."

Passang stiffened. "You want me to say that?"

"Nothing we can do now's going to bring Dan back. What's the difference?"

"They won't believe you," Passang blurted. "The Darjeeling police are not stupid."

As soon as he had spoken he realized his mistake. The American leaned forward, his eyes narrowed. "Why not?" Why won't they believe me?"

Unconsciously Passang raised his hand to the throat of his jacket, the significance of the rope stub starkly clear to him. There had been no time for Crail to dispose of the stub; he had dropped it in panic. It was the act of a frightened man, a coward perhaps, but not necessarily a desperate cold-blooded one. "Because," Passang said, "rope does not break like that. It will hold up to half a ton. Any guide in these mountains knows that."

Crail's voice was flat, toneless. "You don't believe me either?"

Passang flushed. "I know only what you tell me, sir."

Crail's mouth tightened. He was so close that Passang could smell the sweat on him, hear the labored rhythm of his breathing. After a silence he said, "Suppose we say that Danby wasn't hooked onto a rope when he fell."

Passang looked away, groping for words to explain something he himself could not evaluate. "If I say that I lose face. My business depends on my reputation."

"So?" Crail smiled faintly "That's your angle?"

Passang said nothing, waiting. The whole range stretched before him, remote and inaccessible. The valley below was

somber green, reaching to infinity. The only life visible was a lone bird, wheeling high over the glacier. Involuntarily he shivered.

"All right," Crail said. "How much do you figure your business is worth? Say—a thousand rupees?"

Passang gasped. "You will pay me—to take the blame?"

"Let's say, for loss of face." Crail's hand slid under his coat and brought out a wallet. "Make it two thousand."

Passang moistened his lips. Two thousand rupees was more than he earned in a year. This was his chance, the bonus for which he had prayed, a gift from a merciful God. He could send Talai to Calcutta as soon as he returned. But it seemed almost too easy.

"Here." Crail thrust out a wad of bills.

Passang stared at the money and swallowed. He himself could take the blame, the humiliation; his best days were behind him. But Talai too must share in it. The son would bear the taint of the father's name. This was not the way. "For you it is easy," he said. "You will go back to America. I must live here, and my children, and their children. We Sherpas have long memories."

"Count it," Crail said. "Half now and the balance later."

He doesn't trust me, Passang thought. Because I can agree now, take his money, and tell the truth later. We both know that and fear each other. "No," he said.

Crail riffled the bills with his thumb. "Down below it'll be your word against mine. Who do you think they're going to believe?"

Passang got up, the revulsion rising in him. Crail was right. Whatever Crail said the police would be inclined to accept, simply because he had nothing apparent to gain by lying, while Passang did. But that Crail should threaten him stung him out of all caution. He jerked the stub of the rope from his jacket and held it up. "It is your word again this."

Crail stood up beside him. "So you did find it?"

Passang said thickly, "You cut Danby's rope."

Crail's face was red, angrily defiant. "I cut it. What else could I do?"

Passang lowered his eyes. He did not want to look at this man. All too vividly he could imagine that moment on the ice—Crail losing his head slashing at the rope with his axe, cutting Danby loose. An accident, yes, but he had killed his friend as surely as if he had cut his throat.

"If I hadn't," Crail said, "he'd have pulled me over with him. It was Dan or both of us."

"You might have saved him."

Crail snorted. "I suppose you would have?"

Passang compressed his lips. He might have done the same. Any man might have, to save himself. He did not know. He said, "The best thing you can do now is tell it the way it happened."

"And let the newspapers crucify me? They'd splash it on the front page back home, in my home town. I'd be ruined."

Passang shook his head, thankful that Crail did not suspect how vulnerable he was, how urgent his need. "Then you will understand," he said slowly. "Darjeeling is my home town."

Crail put out a hand as though to support himself. For an instant Passang thought he was dizzy. Then, with an explosive gesture, he flung the bills at Passang's feet. "Take it! That's all you'll get."

PASSANG backed away, the rope stub clutched in his fist. The stub had become the one, the only witness, his protection against Crail. Without it he would be at the man's mercy. He had not intended to use it, nor wanted to, but Crail left him no choice. "No," he said.

"Give me that stub."

Passang took another step back and stopped. Behind him the rock fell away in a sheer drop. He braced himself, facing Crail, his heart pounding. Crail stepped toward him. "Let's have it."

"You won't touch me," Passang said. "If you do, you'll die up here."

"Try to blackmail me!"

"You can't cross the glacier alone, without me," Passing said. He said it as a statement of fact, steadying his voice with an effort, watching Crail's face. "You don't know the way. If you try you'll go down in a crevasse. They'll never find your body either."

He saw Crail's eyes waver, shift to the tongue of ice below, then across to the far band of rocks. The American gave a shaky laugh. "You think that would stop me?"

"Yes," Passang said, "because you would be a fool to die for nothing."

Crail dropped his hands, the fury smoothing from his face as swiftly as it had come. He gave Passang a long intent look, opened his mouth and closed it.

Passang let out his breath. He felt drained, spent, a tired old man who had failed. He wanted nothing so much as to lie down and close his eyes, but he must get Crail into camp before dark.

"You'd better pick up your money," he said at last.

Tight-lipped, Crail bent and scooped up the bills. Stepping past him, Passang tucked the rope stub inside his jacket, reluctant to turn his back to the man. His advantage was temporary; once across the ice Crail would be in his own element again, would have the upper hand. What the American would do then he could only guess. But one thing he did know—momentarily, at least, Crail hated him enough to kill.

The footing below was treacherous, loose and rotten shale that crumbled without warning. He could hear the clatter of Crail's spikes behind, feel the tug and give of the other man's weight against his own on the rope. He forced himself to descend slowly, fighting off the urge to hurry. As long as the rope was taut he controlled Crail's movement, he was safe from surprise.

He had been the fool, he thought. What had his stubbornness gained him? As Crail had said, nothing would bring Danby back. He could stop now, make his terms with Crail. He could still have the money. He had no right to pass up this opportunity for Talai for the sake of pride. But could he trust Crail?

A dark current of fear flowed through him. He could not run. They were roped together, like fish on a string. Nor could he turn on Crail, even in self-defense. He was the guide and he was responsible. If it came to force he had only the skill with the tools of his trade to match Crail's youth and strength.

They dropped down off the rock, working past the impassable maw of the bergschrund, and came to the waist of the glacier. He had climbed this way countless times, but now it seemed unfamiliar and forbidding, a shadowy jumble of seracs and fissures and islands, slate gray in the early dusk. It would be simple to drop a body into a crack. Crail might be thinking that, Crail who was so clever at arranging facts as he saw and wished them to be seen. Was Crail watching for a chance?

Passang had to know. It might be wrong to take the money. That decision would come later. But now he had to be sure. Was Crail merely a coward, a man to be pitied and helped, or was he something else? Everything Passang had dreamed for his son, he realized now, depended on the answer to that question, and he thought suddenly: *Give Crail the chance to prove himself.*

He hunched forward into the wind and swung off their course at an angle. Across the ice he caught a glimpse of their tent, less than three hundred yards away. Hot soup, a sleeping bag, good talk around the primus stove—memories of other men and other climbs came crowding back; the great ones he had known, and the tourists, the kind of men a poor boy like Talai would never know unless—

Then he lowered himself into the last series of crevasses that lay before the rubble of the moraine. Signaling Crail to pay out the line, he inched ahead. A few feet beyond, the crack pinched into the span of a man's body. Below him space yawned into darkness. He halted and peered at Crail, silhouetted against the evening sky, then across at the other wall. It was a delicate maneuver, one that depended equally on his own timing and the security of his anchor. Holding his breath, he leaned far out and made the long step over.

Seconds later he was back on solid ice. He found purchase for his axe and made the belay for Crail. Through half-closed eyes he watched the American disappear into the crevasse, then climb out beside him. A dozen paces beyond he paused by another fissure, wider than the last, and squinted along its edge to check his bearings.

"This the way we came this morning?" Crail said.

"Yes," Passang lied. "The last one."

"Isn't there another way 'round? It looks nasty."

Passang waved his arm. "A bridge over there, but this is quicker." He looked at Crail closely, keeping beyond the man's reach. "You anchor from above and I'll swing out on the rope. Don't slip this time or we'll both go."

CRAIL grunted and took his position. Passang eased into the gap, his face to the ice, groping with his boots. He found a ledge, tested it and let down his full weight. Over his shoulder he examined the far wall until he discovered what looked like a foothold a few feet farther on. Squeezing along the ledge to a point directly opposite, he maneuvered his body around so that he quartered toward it. He was sweating now; deliberately, this time, he had put himself at Crail's mercy, whatever that might be.

"Ready?"

"All set."

Passang gave the rope a tug and jumped. His spikes gripped and held, and he clawed for a hand-hold. His fist wedged into a vertical crack, and he teetered on the edge of space, fighting for balance. Then he found the strength in himself to climb out on top and look back across the crevasse at Crail.

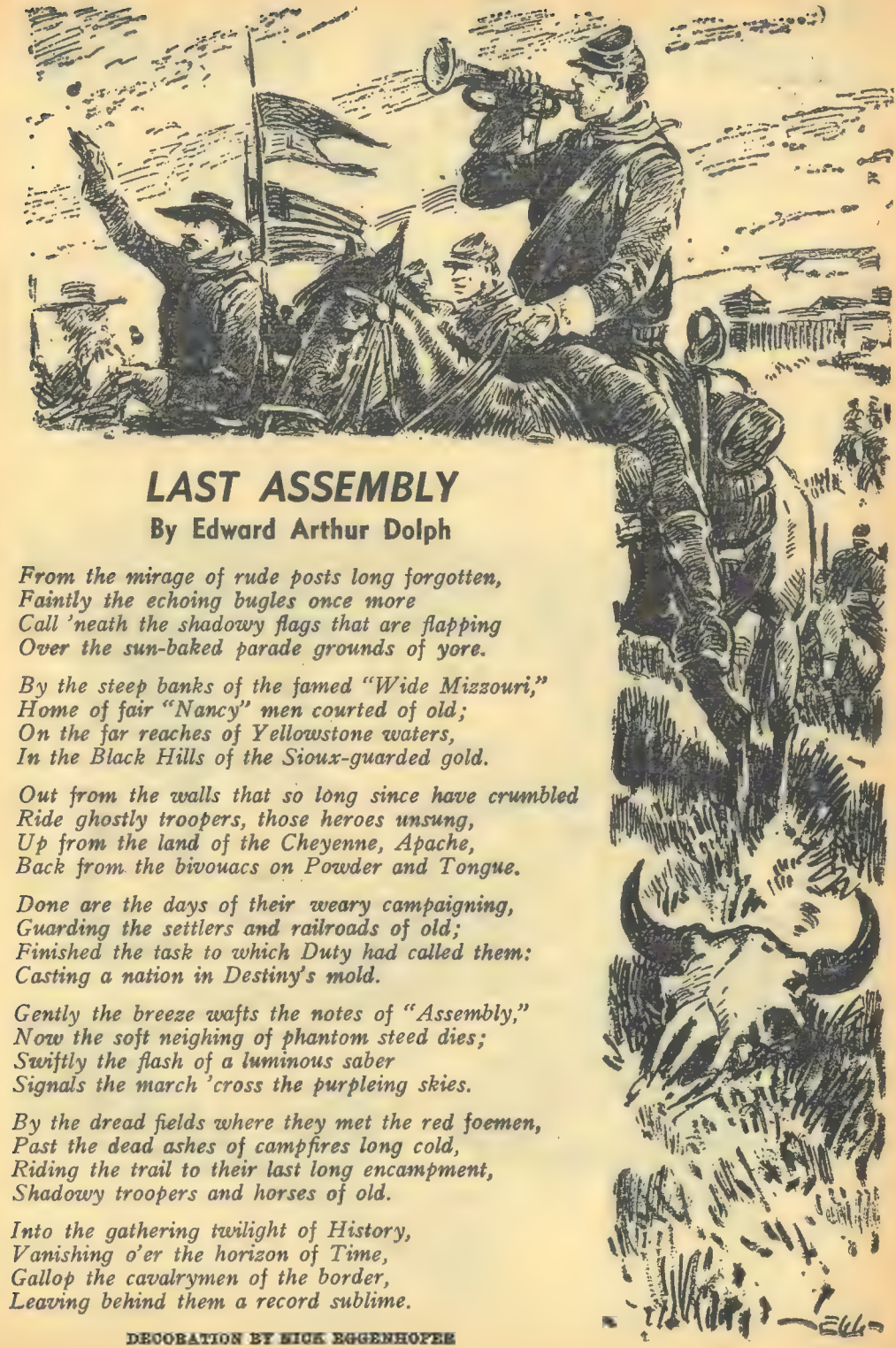
Crail stared back at him with an expression of shocked unbelief, his axe still gripped in his hand. Slowly Passang hauled in his end of the rope, perhaps ten feet, all that was left of it, and for the second time that day touched a smooth severed stub. Crail had cut this one too. Unsnapping it from his belt, Passang tucked the second stub inside his jacket beside the first one, and walked on across the ice toward camp. Crail was shouting at him but he did not turn back.

Five minutes later he squatted in the lee of their tent, soberly smoking his first cigarette of the day. Soon he would start down the trail to the valley. By walking fast he could be back by daylight with help from the village, with more ropes—and a witness.

Passang sighed, not without regret, thinking of the money. It might take him a year, or two years, but somehow he would earn it. Someday his son would climb beside him again, proudly, with a straight back and a straight leg. It would be clean money.

As for Crail—Passang glanced up toward the tip of Everest and then out across the glacier. He could see a dark figure moving back and forth in a tiny circle, as though hunting for something. Now and then Passang could hear his shouts, muffled in the wind. Crail didn't know yet that he had marooned himself on an island of ice between two crevasses; Crail who knew all the tricks, but not his way across Karkori Glacier. Without a rope he could not go forward or back, unless he too chose to jump, and Passang doubted if he had that kind of nerve. Crail had cut the one rope, the only rope that would have brought him across.

In a way, Passang supposed, he had gotten his man down safely from the peak. It would be a long night on the ice, but not cold enough to freeze. Crail would keep. If not—Passang shrugged. Now he knew. Once might be an accident, but twice was murder.



LAST ASSEMBLY

By Edward Arthur Dolph

From the mirage of rude posts long forgotten,
Faintly the echoing bugles once more
Call 'neath the shadowy flags that are flapping
Over the sun-baked parade grounds of yore.

By the steep banks of the famed "Wide Mizzouri,"
Home of fair "Nancy" men courted of old;
On the far reaches of Yellowstone waters,
In the Black Hills of the Sioux-guarded gold.

Out from the walls that so long since have crumbled
Ride ghostly troopers, those heroes unsung,
Up from the land of the Cheyenne, Apache,
Back from the bivouacs on Powder and Tongue.

Done are the days of their weary campaigning,
Guarding the settlers and railroads of old;
Finished the task to which Duty had called them:
Casting a nation in Destiny's mold.

Gently the breeze wafts the notes of "Assembly,"
Now the soft neighing of phantom steed dies;
Swiftly the flash of a luminous saber
Signals the march 'cross the purpleing skies.

By the dread fields where they met the red foemen,
Past the dead ashes of campfires long cold,
Riding the trail to their last long encampment,
Shadowy troopers and horses of old.

Into the gathering twilight of History,
Vanishing o'er the horizon of Time,
Gallop the cavalrymen of the border,
Leaving behind them a record sublime.

DECORATION BY NICK EGGENHOFER

Charley Hoe Handle Gets Caught

WHEN Charley Hoe Handle, the Injun poacher of Stick County, woke up, it seemed to him he was awful hungry. And what he was hungry for was a good mess of venison. He hadn't ate any of that in almost three months.

Charley reached over to the table beside his bed, picked up the makin's, and rolled hisself a cigarette. He lit it, then lay back to puff away while he sort of considered things. The more he considered, the more he thought that he just had to have a mess of venison. The next idea was to go get it.

Charley got out of bed, padded across the floor, stuffed kindlin' in his stove, lit it, and went back to bed until the cabin

ILLUSTRATED BY PETER KUHLHOFF

"Pretty good, Charley!" Horse Jenkins hollered. "Wouldn't you like some?"

By

JIM KJELGAARD

got warm. Bein' late fall, daylight didn't come bright and early, and it wasn't too bright when it finally did get around. But Charley could see through the windows when he got up again. He put his griddle on the stove, mixed hisself a good mess of flapjacks, cooked 'em, ate, and took his .30-30 off its rack.

Now Charley Hoe Handle had been runnin' around in Stick County when there was only his house and two others in it, but he had been old enough to set the way he was goin' to live. The idea was to sleep when you're tired, eat when you're hungry, and get what you want when you want it.

Charley just hadn't been able to change his ways when both the law and other people came to Stick County. He'd been just too set in the things he wanted, and besides he had knowed a lot. The nature of the animal, two or four-footed, laid right in his fingertips. That's one reason why no game warden ever sent to Stick County had ever been able to catch Charley violatin'. Charley had give in to civilization only to the extent that he bought a huntin' license every huntin' season and a fishin' license every fishin' season.

The old Injun went out the door with his .30-30 in his hands.

He had a feelin' in his fingers that Horse Jenkins, the warden of Stick County, wouldn't be around today and Charley trusted his hunches. Horse had last been

around the day the lame mushrat crawled through the lily pads in front of Charley's cabin.

Charley didn't know what day that was because he never went by days. Calendars, clocks, and such-like, belonged to people who didn't know no better than to use 'em. Charley, like everything else what lived in the woods, trusted the four seasons, the moon, and the feel of the air.

He'd had a hunch that Horse Jenkins would be around the last day he had been there.

Charley took his toboggan down off its rack and started off across the snow. No matter what Horse Jenkins or anybody else thought about him, Charley knowed one thing. He took his livin' out of the woods, but he never took anything he couldn't use and he never went on a massacree.

If there was only one buck hangin' around, and five or six does, Charley would take one of the does before he shot that buck.

If a pond was short on fish, or a thicket on rabbits, Charley Hoe Handle stayed out of it.

But for a long while he had had his eye on a buck what lived in Spiggoty Swamp.

It was a fine whoppin' big one with a nice spread of antlers, and right now it was at its peak. Next year it wouldn't be no special good, so now was the time to take it.

Charley crossed the ice which covered Candy Crick, climbed the bank on the other side, and continued on to Spiggoty Swamp.

He flushed a doe and a young buck, and went into the middle of the swamp where the big one fed. Charley sunk down behind a thicket and looked at the sun.

It wasn't quite high enough yet, but when it got high Charley cocked his rifle. It couldn't of been more than twenty seconds later when the big one came along. Charley dropped it in its tracks, hog-dressed it, and tied it skillfully to his toboggan.

He started back, and was awful near Candy Crick when he got the idea somethin' was wrong. There wasn't time to do very much. Charley left the toboggan where it was, grabbed a spruce branch, swung hisself into another spruce and from there over to a big old tree.

He crawled up as high as he could into its branches.

Ten seconds later Horse Jenkins come along and sat hisself square on top of Charley's buck.

CHARLEY looked at him, big as a bull and twice as ugly most of the time, but now Horse was grinnin' from ear to ear.

Charley knowed why. Horse Jenkins had been tryin' to run him into a hole ever since he had got to be the Stick County warden, and now it looked like he was goin' to do it. Still, there was some small hope.

Charley could go through the trees 'most as easy as a squirrel, and he didn't leave no more tracks. There was one chance in a thousand that Horse wouldn't see him up that tree or figger out that that's where he had went. Still, even Horse Jenkins ought to be smart enough to look there.

Horse hollered, "Hey, Charley! Come on out!"

Charley Hoe Handle didn't even blink an eyelash. Many a coon that would of been caught had got away by keepin' still.

Horse grinned a little bit broader and hollered again, "I'm stayin' here until you do!"

Charley hunched hisself a little closer to the tree and hung on tighter, but he didn't know how long he could do it because the temperature outside was about zero. Up that tree it seemed about ten degrees colder, but there wasn't no use in givin' up until he had to. Somethin' always happened, but after two hours nothin' had.

Horse Jenkins built hisself a fire and cooked a sizable chunk of the buck's liver. He ate, lickin' his fingers and smackin' his lips so loud Charley could hear him.

"Pretty good, Charley!" he hollered. "Wouldn't you like some?"

Charley cussed under his breath and stayed where he was. He kept his eyes on

Horse, watchin' him set there like a raven that's waitin' for a moose to die. After another hour and a half Charley knowed he couldn't hold on no more. He had some ideas about sneakin' down from the tree and tryin' to sneak off, but his hands was just too cold to hold him.

Charley slid down the tree like a sack of feed goin' down a chute, and plumped hisself out onto the snow. He sat there, blinkin' like a owl at Horse Jenkins. Horse laughed.

"Well, well, well! The things you won't find up a tree!" says he.

"Oh, shut up!" says Charley.

"This your buck?" says Horse, who seemed to be havin' as much fun as a kid at a lollipop party.

"It's my sled," says Charley, knowin' he was caught and determined to be defiant about it. "I ain't got the least idear how the buck got on it."

"You sure?" says Horse.

"I'm sure," says Charley, who hadn't had one hope in a million of makin' his bluff stick.

"Will you swear to that?" says Horse sternly.

"I'll swear to it," says Charley.

"In that case," says Horse, pickin' up the toboggan's draw string, "I'll take it in. A friend of mine wants a good head to mount in his club house, and this one's as good as I've seen." He grinned wider. "You really should ought to keep a calendar, Charley, or else come to town once in a while to find out how your paleface brothers keep time. . . Deer season opened day before yesterday."

"RILEY GRANNAN'S LAST ADVENTURE"

This classic of funeral sermons—delivered in a burlesque theater in Rawhide, Nevada, by Herman W. Knickerbocker, the busted preacher-prospector, over the body of Riley Grannan, the dead-broke gambler—is one of the most popular features ever to appear in the pages of *Adventure*. It is now available in pamphlet form at ten cents a copy.

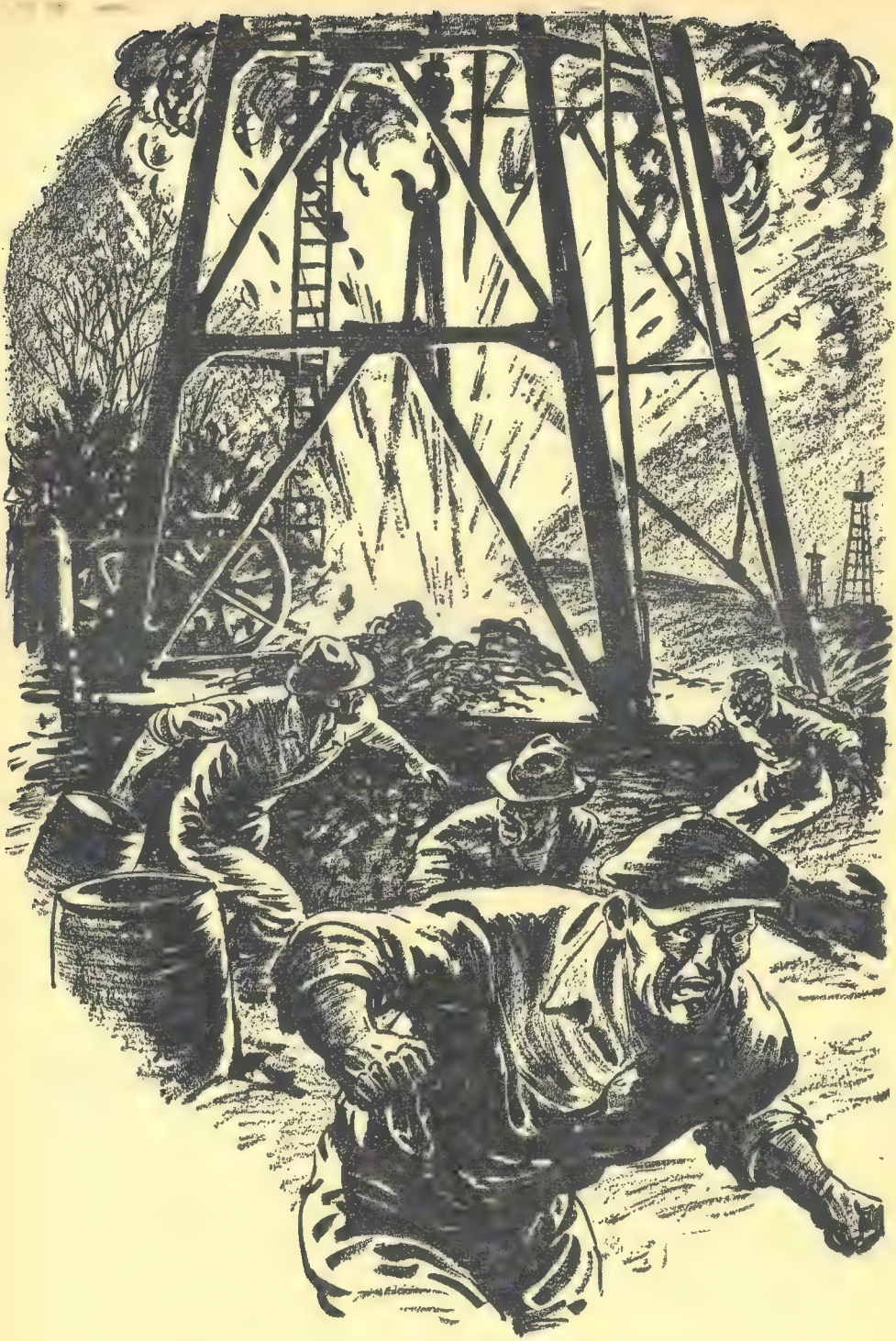
Adventure,
205 East 42nd Street, New York 17, N. Y.

Please send me.....copies of "Riley Grannan's Last Adventure." I am enclosing.....cents. (10c in stamps or coin for each copy desired.)

.....
Name

.....
Street Address

.....
City or Town State



"Hang on, gang," Steve shouted. "Kane, Kingman, Kennedy, O'Connor! What are you—rabbits?"

"HARD HEAD" DRILLER

ILLUSTRATED BY JOSEPH A. FARREN

By
JAMES NORMAN

JEANNIE stood back from the highway, her shoulders and gin pole squaring off the early morning sunlight as it slanted across the valley slopes. Except for a certain lankiness, she looked like any other drilling well because you approached her over a rutted road, passing the tool dresser's shed, the battery of high pressure boilers and the mud sumps filled with slimy gray liquid before you saw the jeering machinery under her 170 foot steel derrick. It was here that all similarity to oil wells, living or dead, ended. Jeannie was on her own.

She had nearly three miles of drill pipe spinning in an abysmal black hole in the earth—deeper than any well had ever dared go before. She kept right on drilling as though she never wanted to stop. She was adventurous that way. No one knew where she was going and to make it worse, her three crews, as well as myself, had gotten adventurous with her. We knew she was queer. She was the strangest well I ever fired a boiler for and we all sort of humored her along. That is, all of us but O'Connor, the redheaded driller on the graveyard tour or night shift.

Jeannie had a long-term grudge against O'Connor, just as the latter cued a grudge against Steve Petersen. She usually picked the Irishman's tour to break down on, even though he was the best all-around driller on the Coast.

Perhaps Jeannie had it in for him because he was a "hard head." That's the name for old-time Pennsylvania drillers: men born on a derrick floor, cradled on a walking beam and nursed by mud pumps. O'Connor was squat and box-

faced. He had muscles that knotted like steel cables and he had ranged up and down the nation's oil fields so long those muscles were practically lubricated by oil.

He was never very popular with the well crew, most of us being younger men, raised on rotary rigs. Like the average "hard head," he was a fierce defender of the up and down system of drilling where cutting tools are spudded or banged into a hole at the end of a cable instead of rotated by a string of pipes. But one way or the other, he had a sixth sense for drilling. He could clamp his mud caked, calloused paw around a Kelly pipe and without so much as glancing at the gauges, could call off the pressure on the drill bits at the bottom of the well. It was as if his fingers were that long, reaching down into the crusted earth.

That's just what Jeannie didn't like. She was as modern as a Zublin bit and built for rotary drilling. She liked the feel of my four hundred horsepower steam engine driving the rotary table around under her bolted rig. She enjoyed the sight of a ninety foot drill collar slipping through the hole in the rotary, then the miles of pipe until only the octagonal shaped Kelly showed in the table and the whole business turned. She responded to the cool heaviness of mud being forced down her gullet until it came out the bottom, cooling the cutting bits, backing up between pipe and well wall, sealing off gases and cave-ins. Jeannie was modern. You had to be new in oil, like Steve Petersen, to get along with her.

IF you asked O'Connor for his objective opinion and sloughed off most of the unprintable adjectives a driller limps along on, he'd tell you young Steve was a two-headed, school bred, swivel-necked brat. It was his firm opinion that if anything fatal happened to the well, Steve would be to blame. The funny part about it was that Steve liked O'Connor while the reverse didn't hold.

Young Petersen was the tool pusher in charge of the whole drilling show. Like his title, he had to be a man of parts. He checked logs, fed the men tools and saw to it that the three crews drilled without a hitch. He was responsible only to Joyce, the company field superintendent.

Although young for his job, he was a very likable chap: square-jawed, always cheerful, the kind who breezes from one job to a better one without much trouble. He came to the oil fields, long on book learning, short on experience. Starting at the bottom, his rise was almost meteoric—year one, a roughneck, next year a driller, third year a drill foreman, now a tool pusher. He had a way with the men, the front office and Joyce. The deep hole was his idea. At 12,000 feet Jeannie pierced a moderate showing of oil sands but Steve talked the company into drilling on for bigger things.

"He doesn't know what he's in for," O'Connor had announced. "The deeper we go, the tougher it'll get. He won't be able to handle it. Too green."

But Jeannie kept right on drilling at sixty revolutions per minute and O'Connor's words didn't mean much until one morning toward eight o'clock, the end of the graveyard tour, when she took it out on the "hard head" driller again. I was on my boilers, a short distance from the derrick. I could hear the steady grinding of the rotary table gears and I knew Jeannie's cutting bits were champing away complacently through the hard, fine Avenal sand formations way down under. She was like an old lady munching through corn cakes. Suddenly the bits froze and no matter what O'Connor did, he couldn't move them off the bottom.

Operations stopped dead. There were fifteen thousand feet of pipe wedged in the hole—absolutely tight. O'Connor glared at one of the roughnecks and let out a stream of twenty epithets without repeating himself once.

"Kingman!" he shouted hoarsely. "Get the bailer."

Instead of getting the bailer, Kingman slumped on the lazy bench. "She don't need no bailer. What she wants is Steve," he said.

"Get the bailer!" O'Connor repeated. There was an edge on his voice.

Kingman didn't move. O'Connor swore another long, loose string. His square face turned as carroty as his hair for this wasn't the first time Kingman had

balked on orders, preferring to wait for Steve.

The rest of us crowded in on the derrick floor—myself, Nap the derrickman, Kingman, Oliver and Jones, the roughnecks. We all stared at the motionless Kelly, half buried in the table, as if we couldn't imagine Jeannie giving up so easily. But there was more behind it than that. A frozen pipe in a deep hole means a ticklish job of either bailing the pressure mud from the pipe and shooting down a charge of nitro to jar the works loose or, fishing blindly in a black hole, cutting out pipe section by section. If we couldn't get the drill collar out, the hole was lost as well as the two hundred day cost of drilling.

A snub-nosed, tool pusher's truck clattered around behind the mud sumps and a moment later Steve Petersen and Kennedy, the drill foreman, joined us. I noticed O'Connor instantly tighten up like a clam. His eyes showed resentment as he watched Steve cheerfully clap Napoli, the derrick man, on the back, saying, "How does she go, Nap?"

Napoli, a chunkily built little Italian, grinned. "I pull em up, poosh em down, like every day," he said.

Steve turned to O'Connor.

"Well, how bad is it?" he asked.

O'Connor frowned. "Worse than you think. Bit's froze fast. We'll have to shoot it. And maybe that's no good."

Steve nodded thoughtfully though the problem of the frozen bit seemed hardly to weigh upon him. He examined the well log and the mud pressure gauges. "You'll have to bail her to shoot," he said. "It takes too long. I can't get a well shooter around here until tomorrow. Try hoisting again."

O'Connor looked amazed. "Hoisting —" he fumed. "Maybe you think we're playing with a shallow well. Maybe you got some batty idea that if anything goes haywire O'Connor can still cut the pipe down to the drill collar, whipstock it and detour the hole. Well, I can't. This is a deep well. It's never been done. It isn't going to be done now."

"We'll try it," Steve repeated calmly.

"You're crazy!" O'Connor spat on the floor.

"No time for opinions," said Steve. "Take the drawworks, O'Connor. Napoli, up on the rig. . ."

For the moment, Steve's eyes were as sharp and piercing as ice picks. Glancing at each of us, there was more request in his attitude than command. The boys were feeling pretty tight inside when they stood by their posts. The business of hauling on a frozen pipe like you'd pull a stuck cork from a bottle is no soft stunt.

"O.K. Tighten her up," Steve yelled.

The hoisting gear creaked, cables grew taut, stretched from the drill pipe up through the crown block pulley at the top of the derrick. As the tension increased, O'Connor called out the stress. His voice had a hard, angry fiber in it.

"Two points, two and a quarter, three. . . ." Each point stood for so many pounds of stress per square inch at the top of the drill pipe. A cold, oozy sweat broke out on Foreman Kennedy's face when the hoisting gear strained under a pull of sixty-five thousand pounds.

"Petersen—that's all she'll take!" he shouted.

THE derrick shivered in every bolt. It creaked and groaned violently. Another minute and she'd buckle under, crumbling like so many smashed match sticks. Then O'Connor started yelling and pointing upward. Half way up the rig, on the double board platform, Napoli was frantically unhitching his safety belt. "No stay," he screamed. "I jump!"

"Napoli!" It was Steve's voice.

The Italian up in the derrick stared down. He hesitated a moment, then refastened his belt.

Just then something queer happened. The drill pipe began stretching out through the rotary hole—five feet, ten, sixteen, twenty feet. "She's free. We made it," Kennedy shouted.

O'Connor grabbed the pipe. You could see that he was feeling—knowing what was happening way down in the darkness. "Free! You're cock-eyed. The drill pipe is stretching!" he yelled above the screech and strain of the cable hoist.

All of us looked on, amazed. I had seen pipe stretch before, but not like that. Twenty, twenty-two feet! The steel pulled out above the rotary table like a fat round rubber band. It stretched well past its elastic limits and still didn't part. It just hung together while the hoisting gear dragged on it with another quarter point of stress.

Suddenly Jeannie's rig couldn't stand the strain any longer. It had to come. She gave a wild heave throughout the length of her derrick, followed by an ominous groan. Then I caught my breath. A girt bar buckled twenty feet up her frame. Some of the men started to run, then a steel corner joint snapped away like a bullet out of a gun. The joint bolt whistled downward.

"Petersen—" Kennedy almost screamed it out.

For a second Steve looked around with a boyish, accusing expression on his face. A trickle of blood ran down the side of his cheek. Then he folded up on the derrick floor, out as cold as a light.

The place was in a turmoil for a second. O'Connor jammed the drawworks clutch into neutral while Kennedy rushed to Steve's side. Napoli slid down the safety ladder like laundry down a chute. Even the men from the morning tour, just about to relieve us, crowded in. Someone yelled for whiskey; another for iodine. Kennedy and Napoli clucked like a pair of hens, each trying to wipe the blood from Steve's face.

"Better get him to a doctor," Kennedy murmured in an anxious, fatherly tone. "It's only a flesh wound, but then. . ."

"Here's the whiskey," someone cut in, shoving a bottle of dollar stuff into Kennedy's hand.

The taste of liquor stiffened Steve. He sat up, blinking feebly. He didn't speak. Instead, he rolled his eyes up toward Jeannie's super-structure sort of accusingly. Again he closed his eyes, pinching the lids. "You're hurt, kid. Take it easy," murmured Kennedy as he eased him back on the floor.

"I'll drive the truck up," I said. "Take him to the emergency hospital in Delano."

It was then that I noticed O'Connor standing by with an I-told-you-so expression on his shoebox face. He was plainly disgusted that everyone was babying Steve. It just isn't natural around oil wells. "He almost wrecked the rig," O'Connor growled. "Wait till Joyce gets here. We'll see what kind of kindergarten this is."

I went back of the mud sumps, picked up Steve's little open-backed truck and shunted it around to the ladder side of Jeannie. Getting out of the truck, I saw O'Connor gabbing with Joyce, the company field super, who had just come up. Joyce was a very tough, business-like fellow with a reputation for running his wells on schedule, like railroad trains. He was taking in everything O'Connor said, which was plenty.

"Petersen's bats," O'Connor explained with an added few unmentionable words. "He's blasted green enough to kill us all. Now we've lost the hole. The pipe is in there so fast it'll take a year to cut out."

"What would you suggest, O'Connor?"

"Nuthin! We should have stopped at 12,000 feet when we had an oil showing. And you should have dumped the kid. He's short on experience. This shouldn't have happened. You know it."

Joyce ran his experienced eyes over the jammed well works. He shook his head

doubtfully. "You're too hard on the boy, O'Connor," he said.

"Hard!" snapped O'Connor. "He ought to be canned."

"He's got a lot of imagination."

"I can't drill wells with that."

The super pursed his lips and watched the preparations being made in the truck. The men were spreading out sacking in the back, making a softish bed. Napoli and one of the roughnecks lifted Steve's limp one hundred and sixty pounds atop the bed with extreme caution. Nap patted Steve's shoulder re-assuringly. "We'll wait until he comes to," said Joyce. "Then we'll see about the hole."

O'Connor sniffed resentfully. "Think he can figure out a way, eh?" he said. "Well, the kid never figured out anything without me. I can't help him this time. The hole is too deep. It's lost."

WE four drove into Delano: Napoli in the back, steadying the kid's head; O'Connor in front beside me. The truck made good time over the four mile stretch. We didn't talk much. I worried about the possibility of the well being abandoned, which meant a layoff from work, and I guess there was a lot on O'Connor's mind because when we hit town, he loosened up.

"Damned if Joyce isn't blind himself," he muttered. "Imagination! Huh! That kid tool pusher gets us into one jam after another. This time he bit too big a chunk. What he knows about wells you can ram down a two inch liner. I said the deeper we'd go, the more he'd get it in the neck. Well, he's getting it!"

I let up on the gas as we swung into Main Street. "Think so?" I asked.

"Seen it happen before," replied the driller with ill concealed heat.

"You don't understand the kid. He's got something," I said. I tried to think of what it was which made the rest of us like Steve. I remembered Napoli. "Yeah," I added. "Remember how Nap was hitting the bottle? He was a good derrickman except for that. It would have washed him up for good. Steve got him on the wagon."

"So we're a nursing home, eh? What kind of blarney is that?"

"The kid knows things," I countered a little testily. "Remember the oatmeal?"

"Oatmeal!" O'Connor packed a dozen pounds of irritation in that response, then shut up like a Christmas tree valve.

"Forget it," I murmured, realizing I had drilled into a touchy matter. The oatmeal incident had occurred just before Jeannie ran into her first oil sands a month back. Her bits had broken through a hotbed of heaving shales and water began running from rock fissures with the danger of seeping down the hole into the oil formations below.

It was a tough situation. O'Connor pushed mud down the hole under heavy pressure but the water wouldn't seal off. Then along came Steve, cheerful and confident as ever.

"What's up?" he asked.

"Water! A whole seeping lakeful," O'Connor growled.

"That's nothing. Jeannie likes to wet her feet once in a while," Steve grinned.

They talked it over. The "hard head" driller made some mention of how, in the old days, fissures were sealed by packing them with clay, mud and beans. "Beans swell in water," he explained. "But it's no good here. The beans would swell in the pipe. You can't get them through the bit jets."

Steve jumped on the idea and before you knew it, he had a mixture of mud and oatmeal pumped down. It did the trick. Kennedy said that it was heady engineering and Joyce praised the kid for his imagination. What burned O'Connor was that Steve gave him full credit for the idea; meanwhile everyone went around saying Steve was just a very modest guy. Nobody paid the slightest attention to the driller.

As the well went deeper, one thing after another happened like that. Each time, young Petersen borrowed some little "hard head" trick and with a slight twist, pulled the job through. It gave Jeannie a reputation as a well wanting queer handling. She took on character. The boys called her an adventuress and Steve nursed that spirit because it seemed to help the works.

It turned into something bigger when Jeannie passed thirteen thousand feet, the previous deep well record. Suddenly

the tension around her lean derrick got fierce. For days no one dared talk above a whisper and sometimes you'd even catch a roughneck moving around on tiptoes. One night Kingman showed up with a dime store globe. He pierced it with a stiff wire to demonstrate where Jeannie was likely to come out. . .

"There," he said. "Burma. . ."

Such activity sort of reamed off whatever insulation O'Connor ever had on his nerves. He was positive Steve would wreck the well. It was something he just couldn't stand so he backed a wildcat hope that, since Joyce wouldn't do anything, the front office people would crack down on the kid. Maybe they should have, but they never came around. Considering the condition of Jeannie, I had an uneasy feeling. Perhaps O'Connor was right.

Now, as we drove into town, past the Delano Hotel, O'Connor's hope suddenly bloomed. He looked sharply past me, eyeing a fancy limousine parked by the curb. My glance swerved with the driller's, then I caught my breath. Poor Steve! McWilliams, the president of our company, Lacy, the production manager and a couple of sleepy-eyed, familiar vice-presidents sat in that car. I had seen them before at another well. When they came out it meant trouble shooting.

"Going to look over Jeannie," O'Connor smiled. A peculiar, satisfied expression wreathed his square face and I thought I heard him humming a song snatch—*"There'll be some changes made."*

WHEN O'Connor returned to the well at midnight, he came in with a long, sour face. He had probably thought things over and was beginning to realize that if Steve were fired and the well abandoned, we'd all be out of jobs. Such a prospect wasn't pleasant because, even without bad news, a well at night is dreary enough. During a night tour you fit your whole world within a few cups of cold brightness scooped from the darkness by the electric bulbs strung around the derrick.

But O'Connor got an awful surprise; the same as I had when I came in a few minutes earlier.

The place resembled an animated cartoon of a very busy bee hive. Our going off crew were swinging ninety foot stands of pipe from the rack to the rotary; joining and slipping them into the hole. Yes, the pipe was out. Over behind the drawworks, the company bigwigs—McWilliams, Lacy and Joyce, were beaming over Steve Petersen whose cheek was laced with adhesive. You'd think he had just won the Distinguished Service Medal.

I already knew what had occurred. It was a first class engineering job and Steve had pushed it through. It seems he hadn't been in the hospital five minutes before he was on a phone ordering the men at the well to drop a string of cutting tools almost three miles down inside the pipe. They did the job, shearing the drill pipe off down there at the frozen collar. Then they fished for the collar and bit for a while but couldn't loosen it.

When Steve returned, they at least had the pipe out. So the kid tried something fancy—sidetracking the fish. It's never been tried at that depth. A whipstock, which looks like a six foot banana sliced at a diagonal from top to bottom, was jammed into the frozen drill collar at the hole bottom. Then the new drill pipe with a smaller bit was run down. Hitting the whipstock, it slid to one side, starting a new hole at fifteen thousand feet. We just sort of detoured around the old collar and bit. The only trouble was that Jeannie would now be drilling at an angle instead of straight down. If she dropped another thousand feet, she'd be seventy feet off vertical. That was quite like Jeannie. Something for the Slumber Jay gang and geologists to worry about.

The front office men stood around complimenting Steve for this and the fact that a new round trip record had been set. Fifteen thousand feet of pipe up and down in twelve hours. An hour after midnight they went away with the kid. Then Kennedy came over, and in his quiet way, watched the rotary make its rounds again.

"Steve's due for another promotion," he said, thoughtfully.

O'Connor glanced up, glowering. "For this lousy trick?" he asked. "It was me that told him you could do it on shallow wells, not deep ones!"

"It worked, didn't it?"

The driller grunted. "Sure, but when do we strike oil?"

"Another thousand, Steve thinks."

"Steve thinks? Since when?" It was quite plain O'Connor considered the kid's latest feat sheer luck. He was banking his odds that real trouble would soon catch the tool pusher.

During the next few days Jeannie accomplished a lot toward strengthening the driller's conviction. The job ran too smoothly. We logged better than ninety feet a day. Ordinary fishtail bits, designed for soft sands, cut through shale and rock like a knife through butter. Jeannie was really on her way to Burma or points slightly East. Then some queer doings happened to the underground strata.

The geologists pulled corings up to examine the formations. What they found just wasn't a part of any known science and for once, even O'Connor agreed with the schoolmen. They brought up Oligocene shales ahead of Miocene formations, which was like putting the mattress of a bed beneath the springs. It didn't disturb Steve. "It's going to be all right," he explained. But he didn't explain how.

The queerness of Jeannie showed up in the men. No one took her to be a real well anymore for she was like the *Flying Dutchman,* a ship with a purpose of her own. On the sixth night Kingman was caught smoking on the derrick floor. "She ain't the kind to catch fire," he said. The same night, Napoli broke out with a bottle of dago-red. "I give her drink," he announced, trying to pour some wine down the casing.

O'Connor blew up and chased the Italian up into the crow's nest.

Then Steve appeared. The driller was still fuming and he watched suspiciously as the kid sauntered about the works, checking equipment, gauges and the well log.

Steve had done this methodically for the last few days, usually disappearing right after he checked the log. Tonight he varied the performance and came over to O'Connor, grinning.

"Say, O'Connor," he began cheerfully, "sorry I couldn't thank you sooner. Meant to. That was a swell idea of yours, the business of whipstocking the collar and detouring the drill pipe. It saved the hole. The boys appreciate it."

O'Connor stiffened. His mouth grew almost rigid. "My idea!" he gasped.

"You suggested it."

"Suggested nothing!" said O'Connor. "I said you couldn't snub a hole at this depth. You were lucky, that's all."

Steve tapped the driller on the chest with his knuckles. "Stop it, pal," he laughed. "You're underselling your part in drilling Jeannie."

For a second the Irish "hard head" looked as though he were about to soften. He muttered a confused something and ventured a smile.

Steve picked up the log sheet, glanced at it, then at O'Connor. He spoke again, sternly. "Listen, man. You've got to quit being careless. Your log showed a mistake last night. Here's another. We're deeper than you've logged. Fifteen thousand four hundred now. You know what that means?. . . Rio Bravo!"

The driller scowled. Rio Bravo sands. . . . Oil sands. . . Union Oil's producer, farther down the valley, had hit them at eleven thousand. It had been Steve's theory Jeannie would cut into the same formation less than five thousand feet later.

Steve signaled one of the roughnecks. "Kane, ring up Kennedy and the super. We'll be bringing Jeannie in tonight." He turned to O'Connor. "Let's line up the Christmas tree."

O'Connor glanced at his mud pressure gauges, then stared at Steve as though the kid were mad. "Oil, my eye!" he said. "There's no back pressure." His face went livid. "Hey, get out of there before I crack you!" The driller was now yelling at Napoli who had somehow gotten himself tangled in the myriad pipe of the Christmas tree, a complicated arrangement of valves, gas and oil lead-off pipes, a hand operated blowout preventer, which was fitted over the well casing just before oil was brought in. O'Connor lunged past Steve and collared the derrick man with one hand and swung his right fist back.

"I losa myself," Napoli murmured unsteadily. A light of beatitude glowed on

his jovial face as he stared from O'Connor to the half empty wine gallon he clutched in one hand.

Steve turned, stopping the driller's fist. "Cut it, O'Connor," he snapped. "I'll handle him."

"Kindergarten style, eh?"

"I push em up. . . losa myself," Napoli continued garrulously.

STEVE led the derrickman away like a little kid. They went off into the darkness and were gone for a few minutes. When they returned, Napoli was very subdued and weeping a little. Steve had his arm around the Italian's shoulders. He led Nap around the rear of the draw works, kicked out some sacking and made the derrickman lie down on the bedding. Then he tucked him in like a baby.

Most of us stood around, watching the scene in silence. It was something that sort of caught in your throat—the kid handling Napoli like that. We wondered what Kennedy, who had just come up, thought of it.

"He'll be O.K. in an hour," Steve announced. "Let him sleep it off. I'll take his shift."

O'Connor made some non-committal sounds in his throat. The look he shot at Steve dripped with disgust.

"Cut the rotary," Steve ordered. He nodded to the rest of us. We were to take a coring to see if we were in oil sands yet. It was just then that something happened. Jeannie went off on her own again, this time roaring wild.

Suddenly the derrick floor became a nightmare of mud. The stuff roared up out of the hole, surged up under the rotary table and backfired into the pumps with the roar and thunder of a dozen ten inch cannons. For an instant, every man among us froze. "Blowout!" O'Connor's voice rose above the thunder.

I glimpsed the driller fighting against the hurricane of mud, his hands and feet flying into the complexity of controls. He twisted the engine telegraph wheel and the mud pump pressure outlet, trying to force the roiled liquid and the gas behind it into the hole.

"Petersen!" he shouted. "The preventer! Quick!"

Steve had been knocked down by the first onslaught of mud. He clambered to his feet, slipping, drenched. He looked dazed and confused, but not frightened. His hand was within easy reach of the blowout preventer lanyard and yet he acted like one paralyzed, unable to grab it, to shut it down. In a flash, I knew what was wrong. O'Connor had been right. The kid didn't have enough experience to think of something as simple as a blowout preventer in a pinch. You forget everything you learn in books when a well decides to blow.

"Petersen!" It was O'Connor again. His voice lashed forth, ragged with anger. He pivoted toward the Kelly and knocking Steve aside, switched down the safety lanyard. "You turned chicken?" he hissed at Steve. "Step on it. She's good for a minute. Get the tree lined."

Steve came out of his stupor. He shot the driller a grateful glance, then put his shoulder to the job.

Yeah, Jeannie was saved for a minute by the "hard head's" quick action, but only for a minute. Jeannie had gone into the oil sands barefooted, without a perforated liner to keep out the sands. Now gas pushed on the sands, shooting them up with the impact of a million bullets.

We had one minute to get the Christmas tree valves lined and working to take off the excess pressure. If we didn't do it quickly Jeannie'd be torn apart, her machinery smashed and the hole ripped up beyond repair. It was an all out job —Kennedy, O'Connor, the kid, Kane, Kingman and even myself from the boilers, working madly on the derrick floor.

"Look out!" O'Connor abruptly shouted.

Suddenly Jeannie broke loose again. O'Connor must have sensed it. The preventer had gone!

A wicked hissing cut by our ears like knives. A narrow jet of oil, gas and sand shot out the head, stabbing up through the derrick, gushing. The air turned rock hard and reddish bright. I crashed back against the drawworks, O'Connor spinning over me.

"Fire!" Kennedy shouted from somewhere beyond us.

The night turned into day and the whole sky blazed as the narrow, spurting shaft

of oil bloomed upward, searing Jeannie's derrick. We scrambled out from under her like madmen. It was sickening and terrible. Even with O'Connor's fast work, a minute before, it was going. The well was lost. You don't know what kind of an inferno a blazing well can turn into unless you've seen one like the Mary Sudik in Oklahoma go up and scorch the sky for ten solid days.

There was still a hair-line chance of controlling Jeannie before the entire gate valve in the blowout preventer gave way. O'Connor knew that. So did I. But the driller knew he couldn't do anything about it because first you had to control men and Jeannie's men wanted to get away. They wanted to get away as far as possible—fast as possible. I was one of them.

I started to run, then I saw Steve. He stood still, controlling himself, barking out names like a ship captain calling roll. "Hang on, gang," he shouted. His voice sounded calm, sort of flat. "Nap's in there! Back of the drawworks. Kane Kingman, Kennedy, O'Connor. *What are you—rabbits?*"

Napoli in there behind the drawworks. We had forgotten the derrickman. There were some of us who were still ready to forget—and run. "Kane, Kingman, Wilson!" Steve's voice repeated. I saw the men pull up. They looked at Steve, then felt kind of foolish. "Get two hoses in from the steam boilers! Put out that fire!" Steve added. He wasn't excited. It was as if this were something you did every day.

O'CONNOR was first to act and a second later the rest of us were back on the job. It made a tense few minutes. We nozzled two cable hoses from the high-pressure boilers, edged in under the heat and aimed the jets of steam at the casing head on the derrick floor where the oil was spurting out. Steam did the trick. We broke the fire in half the same way you sometimes kill a well fire by setting off a blast of explosives.

After that it was a matter of a little time and a lot of muscle getting the Christmas tree lined, taking off the oil, dumping in into the sumps. It was good oil, the best we've had. We all knew it would probably bring in a couple of thousand barrels a day through a one inch flow pipe. But no one thought of that now. We were feeling pretty satisfied with ourselves, particularly when we saw Steve pull Napoli out from behind the drawworks. The derrickman was singed, but it was nothing a hospital couldn't handle. He could still get about.

I watched O'Connor as he stood by while the kid put first aid on Napoli's burns. Yes, there was a queer expression on the "hard head's" shoebox face. His eyes sort of sparkled. Perhaps he was doing some deep thinking for he gave a start when Joyce and a dozen front office men drove up by Jeannie's scorched apron.

He nudged Kennedy, saying, "When you make your report, keep your lip buttoned about the blowout preventer. There was something wrong with it. That's all." He walked over to the other side of the Christmas tree and tinkered with the valves in a preoccupied manner.

A half hour later I located Kennedy in the tool dresser's shack. He was writing out the report on Jeannie and I noted that he didn't say anything about the slip Steve made when he failed to turn down the preventer. I was more than curious.

"Why'd O'Connor tell you to keep it out?" I asked. "I thought the driller hated the kid's guts? But for that we wouldn't have had the fire."

Kennedy stared at me. "O'Connor learned a lesson," he replied.

"Lesson?"

"Sure. Just what kept him from being a foreman or tool pusher himself. Until the fire, he forgot drilling is a team job. We're out here to get the job done right and everybody had something to give Jeannie. You gave something too. O'Connor had experience to toss in but what he forgot was that Steve had something—a knack of holding men together, a way of getting them to give Jeannie their best."

"Imagination, eh?" I admitted thoughtfully. "Yeah, I guess that's what Jeannie needed."

Kennedy pursed his lips. "Heck, no," he muttered. "She just needed guys like O'Connor and Steve."

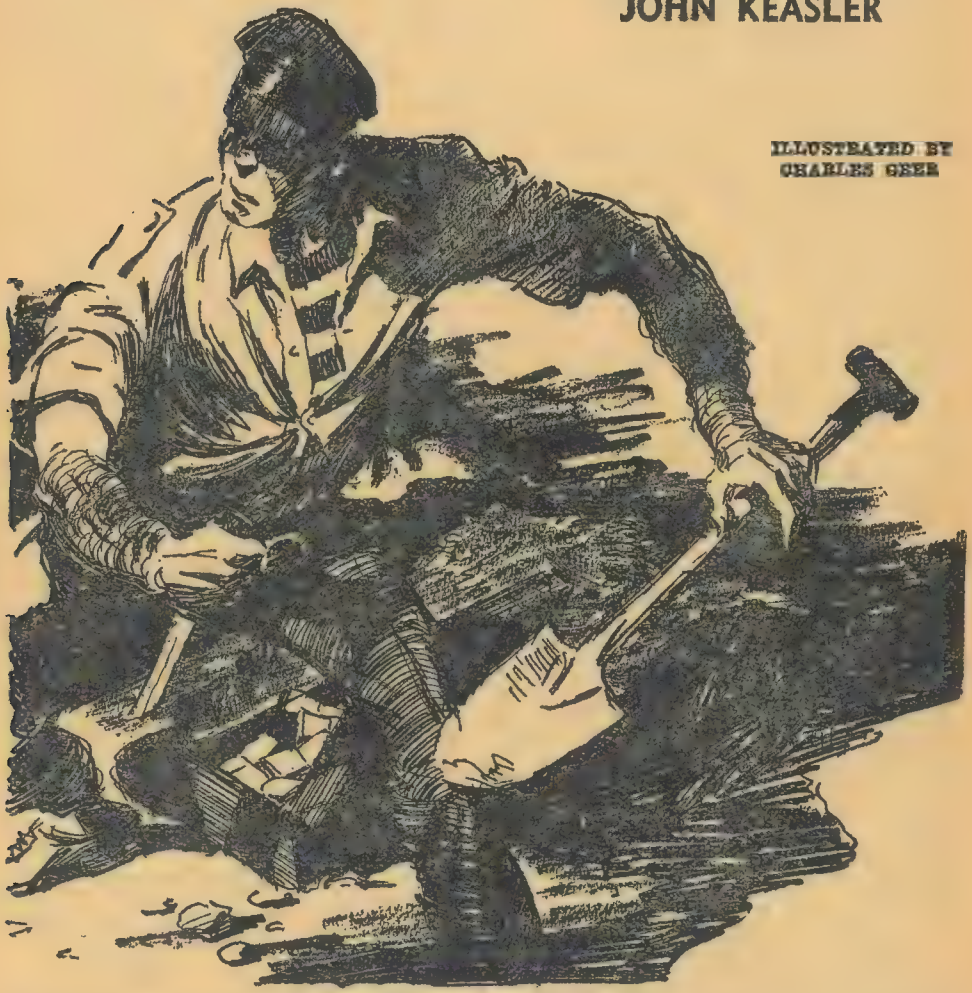
The POSTWAR PLAN

Suddenly Korvene tensed—and instinct, or the almost noiseless click of Reeves' knife, made him whirl about. He screamed as he leaped sideways in time to miss death.

# of JASON KORVENE

By
JOHN KEASLER

ILLUSTRATED BY
CHARLES GEER



THE island river oozed through the moist jungle and emptied sluggishly into the calling Pacific. Sallow little Jason Korvene stalked inland. Sweating under his sun helmet he shifted the strap of the carbine hung from his bony shoulder and pondered when to kill Lawson Reeves.

He watched Reeves' broad back tense as the big Australian, mate of the freighter in the harbor behind them, powerfully ripped a path through the hanging vines. Great fallen leaves carpeted the muddy riverside which squished beneath the plodding feet of the two men; the big, tanned sailor in front with the build and temperament of a disgruntled plow horse, the man behind wiry and small with a yellowed, angled face.

"How far?" The big man tossed the question over his shoulder.

"About three miles up what used to be

the fighter strip," Korvene replied. "Then west. There should still be a road." But you won't have to walk back, the little man reflected silently.

"The money better be there." Reeves' voice was flat. "We split 50-50. That's the deal." It was not a question.

"That's the deal," barked Korvene. "I told you. Quit talking. Travel."

As they walked down the riverbank, Korvene's eyes narrowed with scheming. A curve cut from view the shoreline, bare except for rotting remnants of a war long past. A shrapnel-torn landing craft rusted at the river mouth. The *Jade* rolled easily in the bay, where the fat Dutch skipper still muttered at his first mate's insistence on humoring a crazy, sentimental American passenger and waste a day's sailing time while the passenger went ashore to revisit battlefields where friends had died fighting. Five hundred dollars had helped, but Korvene knew without the help of Reeves he never would have boarded the *Jade* at all in the Fijis. Reeves was a greedy man.

A huge tree snake watched the two men stride along a yard from it, blinked, and slithered away into the greenness. Reeves broke the silence: "Helluva place to knock off a payroll." He laughed, with no mirth. "For a little man you did all right—if you're not lying, matey."

"You'll see whether I'm lying or not," Korvene snarled. "In the morning. It was easy, in a combat zone."

JASON KORVENE, former infantryman, had an excellent story to explain the $35,000 buried on this island; sometimes he almost believed the story himself, so well did he tell it. With attention to color and suspense he had told about his courage, his skill, in stealing an Army payroll here during the war and Reeves had been much impressed that night a week ago in the Suva barroom.

Jason Korvene prided himself on having no conscience. But—oddly enough for a man with no conscience—he did not tell the true story, that he was a pickpocket drafted from his trade to turn military sneak-thief. If not conscience, perhaps a creative turn of mind, or even pride, caused him to tell Reeves the payroll story and not about the diligent stealing from companions who had lived, or occasionally died, with him in the island mud.

Pockets, barracks bags, footlockers of malaria-ridden men, it had all been easy pickings on a war-torn island where money bought nothing, was nothing but paper to be accumulated or mailed home for some improbable future spending. Of course, it had taken determined efforts over the months. The biggest single haul had been $1600, from the sleeping platoon sergeant who had cleaned out the all-night poker game. But there had been others, many others, for Jason Korvene was a single-minded man at his trade.

But Jason Korvene, sneak-thief extraordinary, clever and knowing, had not been foolish enough to try to get the money through Army shakedowns when leaving the island; not with inspection at Angel Island staring him in the face. He had known he would come back, exactly like this.

Suddenly the two men broke through to a clearing. "There's the fighter strip," Korvene said.

Backed by mountains, curled-up steel landing mats pointed questioning tentacles at a never-changing blue sky which peered blandly down at the aluminum wreckage which had once tried to reach it. Korvene pointed. "This way." They headed west.

Darkness was an hour old when they got there.

A thatched peaked roof was barely discernible against the island night.

"What . . .?" Reeves whispered.

"Just a big deserted hut," Korvene spoke too loudly and his smile was invisible in the blackness. "Don't ask questions. We'll sleep here." Docilely, Reeves followed the little man inside.

They slept . . .

When the orange brillant morning sun sprung over the hills, Korvene was already awake, sitting with his back against the pulpit. Reeves awoke, sat up with a start. His eyes widened. He was unaccustomed to waking up in church, especially a missionary-maintained church for Christian natives, with white crosses of an American cemetery in the churchyard.

His gaze questioned. Korvene answered, "It was here before the war. I knew this would be the only place sure

to be here when I got back. Shut your mouth and dig. Right here."

The slit-eyed little man X-ed a mark with his heel in the hard-packed dirt floor, midway between the palm log seats and the rostrum. Greed replaced near-terror in the big sailor's eyes. The short pack shovel flew, powered by Reeves' huge biceps, and dirt showered up. Korvene stood with folded arms, grinning one-sidedly.

The sun came over the trees edging the churchyard.

Spplllankk . . . The shovel banged metal. "Here!" the sailor shouted excitedly, tugging out a small, greenish olive-drab metal box. Jason Korvene quit smiling and checked his carbine. Loaded, off safety.

"Move," Korvene said impatiently. "Let me do it." His pale face glowed and with practiced fingers, those of the professional thief, he bent to flick open the simple clasp. The money, soft and green and beautiful to Korvene, was there, safely wrapped in leather against mold. Suddenly Korvene tensed—and instinct, or the almost noiseless click of the knife, made him whirl about.

"Aghh!" Jason Korvene screamed as he leaped sideways in time to miss death but not the point of Reeves' knife as it punctured his white shirt and opened the tight skin and muscle across his shoulder blades.

Whirling, as Reeves, off balance, stumbled past the little man, Korvene let his carbine fall into his hand and from the hip squeezed the trigger which spat rounded death into the temple of Lawson Reeves.

"You rotten wharf rat," Korvene panted down to the lump at his feet. "You weren't so dumb after all." He winced as he felt blood from the back wound soaking the silk of his shirt.

He peeled off the shirt, hopefully felt the wound and sobbed in relief. Painful, but not dangerous. But he was in frantic haste as he refilled the hole in the dirt floor, hoping the carbine report would not bring a churchman or a curious native. But his luck held as, straining, he dragged Reeves to the jungle edge, buried him shallowly, out of sight under a flattened-out scattering of underbrush away from the clearing edge and left him to rot eighteen inches below ground level.

"Gotta get out of here . . ." Korvene's chest heaved as he grabbed up his carbine, threw away the shovel and pack, secured his torn and bloody shirt to the handle of the ammunition box and headed back toward the river.

His story fell letter-perfect into mind and he polished it mentally as he strode back along the bank. A thorn would make a wound like his, during a desperate struggle to save a friend from a horrible death in a thorn-edged quicksand bog.

Korvene concentrated on his story and cut away from the river at times, to avoid the thicker underbrush. Despite his thirst and the heat, he was elated. He would transfer the money from the box to the belt at his waist, out of sight. The taciturn captain would never doubt his story, nor care much for that matter, about Reeves' untimely death in the quicksand.

Elation wavered and died when he realized he had lost the river.

Calmness was an effort but at least, thought Jason Korvene, he knew the direction to the shore. He headed out through the jungle. The sun was at noon.

Grating breath was in his throat like powdered sand and ebony black mosquitoes and huge, biting flies clung to him. He fell, got up, fell—time and time again.

THE hours burned by slowly to mid-afternoon heat. Sometimes, in desperation, Jason Korvene, possessor of $35,000, screamed. He gave up hope twice. The third time he gave up hope, he stayed face-down in the muck, terrified, weak and in agony.

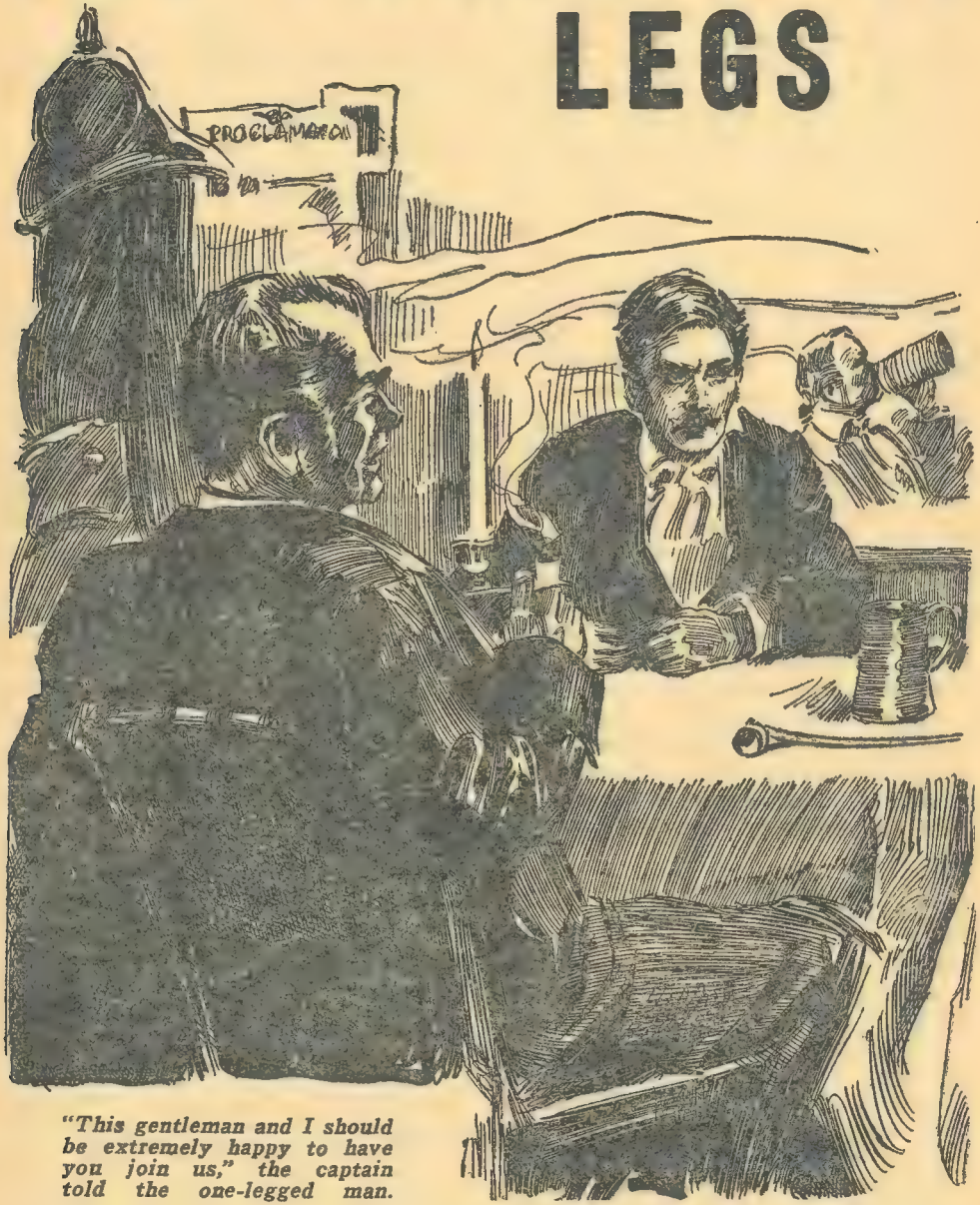
And then he heard it—the purring, contralto noise, the sugary, heavy tone that is the Pacific Ocean patting an island shore. Clutching his box, his hopes, Jason Korvene kicked erect and burst through the last green curtain of viney woods and stumbled out on the beach.

Fear hit him like a physical blow.

There was nothing. No freighter. No river mouth, no battered landing craft as a landmark. Then the irrational fear went away, and he realized he had just hit the beach at the wrong point.

(Continued on page 130)

THE THREE LEFT LEGS



"This gentleman and I should be extremely happy to have you join us," the captain told the one-legged man.

IT WAS a blustery, chilling night. The taproom of the Admiral Kilpatrick Chophouse and Tavern was crowded with a noisy, motley throng of sailors from the ships, gentlemen of the city who knew good food and drink, stevedores and travelers, footpads and pickpockets. The low, heavily beamed ceiling admirably retained warmth from the two great fireplaces, one at either end of the room, despite the constant opening and shutting of the street door to admit newcomers or to allow roisterers to depart; and in the cheerful, flickering light of many candles the atmos-

phere of the place was pleasant and intimate, the air fragrant with tobacco smoke, hot spicy drinks, and roasting meat. From time to time, snatches of song sounded from the men crowded at the bar—sea chanties, Neapolitan folk melodies, music hall ballads of the day—and voices were

By
ROBERT F. GERMANN

ILLUSTRATED BY
EVERETT RAYMOND KINSTLER

raised in hearty laughter, a medley of foreign tongues, and shouts to the bartenders and serving maids.

Opposite the bar, square recesses had been constructed the length of the room, so that diners could sit comfortably at the heavy tables placed therein, free from draughts and in a relative privacy. These nooks (with one exception) were occupied by large groups of well-dressed men, noisily and enjoyably eating and drinking.

In the central recess, alone, his table spread with a long snowy white linen cloth on which stood a silver candelabrum, sat a man of middle age, whose strong, lined, weather-beaten face identified him immediately as a seafarer—but that he was no common sailor was apparent at a glance, for he was handsomely dressed, and his expression, while good-natured and by no means austere, was one of command and assurance. He had just finished his dinner, and now, looking about the room, he caught the eye of his serving maid, who was engaged in conversation with one of the men at the bar. She crossed to him at once.

"Your dinner was satisfactory, Captain?" she asked.

"Excellent, lass, excellent," said the captain. "Now I shall have a pipe, and tell Herman to brew me a mug of punch."

"At once, sir."

The serving maid cleared away the dishes, curtseyed, and left him; she returned in a few moments, bringing him a clay pipe and a steaming mug of punch. The captain took a tobacco pouch from one of his pockets, filled the pipe, accepted with a smile the lighted taper held out by the serving maid, and then sat back comfortably in his seat.

"Mr. Herman's compliments, sir," said the girl. "I am to tell you that the ship *Serpentine* was sighted just before sundown and should put in well before midnight."

"Thank you, my dear," said the captain, smiling at her again. "I am expecting Captain Peters, in that case, to visit here this evening, as is his custom after putting into port, and I daresay he will welcome the opportunity to gloat over me now that I have retired from the sea for good. I shall owe him a bottle of the best champagne, lass, for many years age we laid down a wager that the first one of us to leave our ship would so treat the other at the conclusion of his next voyage—and you must therefore tell Herman to ice a bottle of the best in expectation." He put a coin into the girl's hand. "And you will buy a pretty for yourself with this," he added.

The serving maid blushed, stammered her thanks, and went away. The captain contentedly smoked his pipe, sipped at the mug of punch, and watched the crowd of men at the bar.

PERHAPS twenty minutes later the street door was flung wide, and as it remained open long enough on this occasion for a number of candles to be extinguished by the blast of wind that swept into the taproom, the captain glanced up in some annoyance to see who the inconsiderate newcomer might be. A tall, thin man, richly dressed, entered slowly and with some difficulty, and one of the serving maids, observing immediately his distress, hastened to close the door after him. This gentleman, whose left leg had been removed at the knee, made his way into the tavern, awkwardly supporting himself with a heavy, obviously improvised crutch, to the use of which he could only have been a stranger. His clothing was in disorder and he was evidently in a bad temper. With an expression of displeasure he looked about the room, first at the crowded bar, and then at the nooks, all of which were tenanted.

"If you will follow me, sir," suggested the maid who had been serving the captain, "perhaps I shall be able to find a seat for you in the other room."

"Eh? Oh, very well, my girl. Very well."

It was necessary, in going from the taproom to the main dining room, to pass along the row of tables in the recesses. As the newcomer came abreast of the captain's nook, the captain, who all along had been watching him sympathetically, leaned toward him across his table. "I ask your pardon," he said.

"Sir?"

"I have observed that you are at a loss for accommodation here in the taproom," said the captain politely. "As I have this

large space to myself, and as I am not expecting that anyone will join me, at least for several hours, I thought you might do me the honor, sir, of sharing my table, and, perhaps, pledging me in a mug of punch."

"That is most courteous of you, sir," said the newcomer, the angry expression leaving his face directly, "and I shall be delighted to accept your kindness. My name is Ringler, sir—Joseph Ringler."

"Captain Stoddard, sir, at your service."

They bowed gravely, and Mr. Ringler, dropped his crude crutch to the floor, sank into the seat facing the door with a sigh of relief.

"Two more mugs of punch, my dear," said the captain to the serving maid. "And see that they are piping hot."

"A most disagreeable evening," observed Mr. Ringler, after the maid had gone away. "I have caught a slight chill, I fear, but your hospitality has already warmed me somewhat, Captain, and I am certain that the punch will complete the work."

"May I help you with your coat?"

"Thank you. I shall throw it over the back of this settle. Ah, that will serve."

"I find it most pleasant," said the captain, when his new acquaintance had been served punch and a pipe, "to sit here in the Admiral Kilpatrick of an evening, sipping the really superb punch of the house, and watching the coming and going of the crowd: particularly on such an evening as this, when outside the wind is damp and raw. The fire seems more than usually delightful, the odors from the kitchen especially tempting."

"True," said Mr. Ringler thoughtfully. "Assuredly it is among the best of the eating-places to be found in this city, and I used frequently to visit here before—"

He broke off, frowned a little, and took another sip of punch.

"Ah," the captain murmured sympathetically. "You refer, I presume, to your —handicap. Is it, then, recent?"

"A matter of more than a year. It was not entirely the inconvenience of having lost my leg, however, that led me to forego the pleasure of dining and drinking here—but as much the location of the tavern."

"A malodorous neighborhood indeed," said Captain Stoddard musingly. "And yet one would, I am certain, be utterly wrong to suggest that your avoidance of our good Admiral Kilpatrick is due to a lack of courage on your part. I have traveled great distances, sir, and have come to know something of character."

"Prudence, sir, is not cowardice. The dimness of the streets in this district, coupled with the roughness of the inhabitants, gave me to understand that a man in my condition, about whom too much is known by a certain element of the population, does well to avoid such places."

"I ask your pardon," said the captain. "I had no intention of meddling, nor yet of forcing confidences to which I have no right to presume."

"None the less, Captain, you are curious."

"Yes, sir. I must admit to that fault."

"No fault at all, Captain," said Mr. Ringler, laughing. "I should be curious, myself, were our positions reversed. It is obvious that I have been attacked—what more natural than that you should wish to be apprised of the circumstances? Particularly when I entered this place supported only by a plank picked out of a gutter."

"That gave me to think, I confess," murmured the captain.

"Aye, sir. I was aware of it. I was scarce so clumsy, however, before I lost my leg."

"Your pardon, sir?"

"My wooden leg, I refer to, of course. A business affair necessitated my being in this neighborhood after dark, and on my way through the streets I was set upon by footpads, sir, and my leg stolen." Captain Stoddard looked at him in astonishment. "That board you saw me using as a crutch," Mr. Ringler continued imperturbably, "was a sad expedient. It served, nevertheless, to permit my reaching the Admiral Kilpatrick, for which I am, of course, grateful... With your permission, sir, I shall send for a carriage, for I have no desire to attempt to reach home by means of that rude support."

"But surely, Mr. Ringler, no pressing need exists—so pressing, I mean, that I shall have to be deprived of the pleasure of your company at once?"

"Not at all," replied Mr. Ringler. "I should hesitate, however, further to intrude upon your good nature and forbearance, Captain. I have had no opportunity, as yet, to dine and—"

"Then by all means permit me to suggest the venison," said the captain. "Perhaps after you have dined, you will be good enough to elucidate, sir. Your story is remarkable in outline, but I must confess to a great curiosity about the details. You will have to admit that it is not every man who undergoes the experience of having a wooden leg stolen by footpads."

Mr. Ringler laughed. "You are entirely right, Captain," he said. "On the surface of things, what I have stated is absurd, and assuredly I owe you an explanation. The circumstances leading up to this assault, however, are a trifle—ah—involved, and I shall be happy first to follow your suggestion about dinner."

AS Captain Stoddard was summoning the serving maid, the street door burst open again, and, stumbling over the sill, supported by part of an oar which was being employed as a crutch, entered a very short, dark man, whose left leg was cut off at the knee. The captain's hand, still raised and for the moment forgotten, had by this time been observed by the girl, who hastened to his nook. As she stood waiting for her order, the two men glanced at each other, then nodded slightly in understanding.

"My dear," said the captain, "will you be good enough to step over to the gentleman who just entered and ask him to do us the honor of joining us here at our table?"

The serving maid was unable to repress a start of surprise at the appearance of another one-legged man, but after a moment she crossed the room and spoke to the newcomer. He evidenced some wonder, glanced over in their direction, and then, apparently concluding that the invitation had been extended by gentlemen, began slowly to follow the girl across the floor of the taproom.

"Do you know that man, Captain?" whispered Mr. Ringler.

"Why, no," replied the captain. "Do you?"

"No, sir."

"Nevertheless," murmured the captain, "the circumstances are singular enough, I think, to warrant our—"

"Quite."

"Good evening, gentlemen," said the newcomer, having arrived before them. "Your servant."

"Sir," said the captain in slight embarrassment, "I trust you will forgive what might very well appear to be a most presumptuous intrusion on your privacy. This gentleman and I should be extremely happy to have you join us—but I feel it my duty to state that what led me originally to request your companionship was the extraordinary—ah—"

"Plight," put in the small newcomer coolly. "There is nothing to be gained by mincing words, sir. I am fully aware of the disheveled condition of my attire, but I feel myself fortunate to have been able to reach this place at all after a most vicious and dastardly attack in the street by thieving scoundrels. Thank you, gentlemen, I shall be happy to accept your invitation, for I am still rather breathless and upset."

The newcomer sat on the third side of the table, across from Mr. Ringler.

"I was about to say, sir," resumed the captain, "that I was so struck by the extrordinary resemblance between your plight and that of this gentleman that it seemed the most natural thing in the world to invite you to join us. Mr. Ringler, sir; and I am Captain Stoddard."

"Your servant, gentleman. I am Caleb Adams . . . Resemblance, sir?"

"It was immediately apparent that you have both suffered assault, Mr. Adams; that you have both been unfortunate enough to have lost your left legs—"

"Not lost, sir," snapped Mr. Adams, "stolen!"

The captain's eyebrows raised slightly, and both he and Mr. Ringler looked at Mr. Adams in some excitement.

"There is a devilish connection here," muttered Mr. Ringler. "But perhaps later for that. I am about to dine, Mr. Adams. Will you join me?"

"With pleasure," said Mr. Adams.

"Captain Stoddard recommends the venison."

Details of dinner were arranged, and

the serving maid, who had been watching the three gentlemen with wide eyes, left the room.

"The presence of you gentlemen is particularly surprising to me," said the captain, "for a reason I shall be happy to explain a little later in the evening. Mr. Ringler has, however, been good enough to promise me after dinner the story behind his assault; and I am sure, Mr. Adams, since you have recently suffered something of the same sort, that you will have no objection to his satisfying my curiosity."

"No objection in the world," said Mr. Adams. "I shall, on the contrary, be most interested."

Both gentlemen were hungry, so by common consent the conversation was deferred until they had dined. Then, as fresh hot punch was brought, along with a pipe for Mr. Adams, the three sat back comfortably.

Mr. Ringler puffed thoughtfully in silence for a few minutes, and then began his narrative.

STORY OF THE FIRST ONE-LEGGED MAN

"YOU must know, gentlemen, that before my retirement I was a merchant, and, I may say without false modesty, a successful one. I have been wondering, as I sat here over that truly delicious meal, how best to tell you of the circumstances that led to my being present with you this evening—and I concluded that it would be impossible to clarify a number of matters without going back several years in my life. I mention my trade since that, in a way, led to the curious events of which I shall speak.

"Some two years ago I had occasion to visit several of the islands of the West Indies, buying, trading, selling—in general, carrying on my occupation, the details of which I shall not tire you by relating. During my sojourn among the islands, however, I became the possessor of certain silken goods which were, in my opinion, among the most beautiful I ever have seen. How they arrived in the West Indies I have no idea; but there they were, and I purchased them—for a fraction of what they were worth, I may add. Rather than storing them with my other goods in the hold of the ship, I took them into my cabin with me, partly to enjoy looking at them and partly because I feared that someone, observing them, might be tempted toward theft.

"The ship upon which I left the islands, the *Lydia F. Durham*—"

"The *Lydia F. Durham!*" exclaimed Captain Stoddard, in evident perturbation.

"Yes, sir. You know of the ship?"

"I do, indeed," said the captain, controlling himself. "However—pray continue, Mr. Ringler. My apologies for interrupting you."

"The ship made a rapid passage," continued Mr. Ringler, "in spite of extremely rough weather. I am no sailor, gentlemen, even though much of my business life has been spent in sea travel—wherefore, during practically all of that voyage, I remained in the seclusion of my cabin. I mention this, not in excuse of what I did, but in explanation. I suppose, in my illness, I was greatly given to brooding, and that was why I resolved, ultimately, that the outrageous duties charged upon imports into this country ought to be ignored by anyone whose interest in any particular items lay in their loveliness and intrinsic value rather than an arbitrary evaluation set by politicians to whom beauty exists merely for purposes of taxation. I decided, therefore, to smuggle my silks into the country.

"I have been an honest and conscientious man all my life, gentlemen, but I suppose on occasion the old Adam comes out in all of us. Thus in my case. I had no objection to paying duties on the goods I had purchased in the ordinary way of trade, but those silks symbolized to me something quite different—something personal—and my spirit rebelled at the thought of their being handled and appraised by gross men to whom they could represent nothing beyond a cash value.

"I recalled a stratagem worked by an acquaintance of mine many years ago, and, being well aware of the extreme fussiness and imaginative vacuity of customs officials here in the port, I thought that the same thing might be successful in my case. Those men can be bribed, of course,

but I had no intention of submitting to extortion over my silks. My scheme, therefore, had to be at once simple and foolproof.

"Like most ship's cats, the one on the *Lydia F. Durham* was extremely shy and wild. I had made several half-hearted attempts to lure the animal to my cabin, but without success. The day before we were to dock, however, I felt somewhat better, and realized that it was necessary to put into practice without further delay the stratagem my acquaintance had told me of. Catching that cat without being observed was, I think, among the more difficult endeavors of my entire career; but at length, coaxed by meat I had stolen from the galley, it approached my cabin and I was successful in snatching the beast. It bit and clawed, but I was firm.

"I had hidden the silks in my bed; and the cat I placed in the large suitcase which formerly had contained them. After we had docked, I went ashore carrying my luggage as though utterly innocent of any wrongdoing: the customs officials started to search my personal effects with their damnable and invariable attitude of expecting to arrest me within a matter of moments.

" 'Please don't open that large suitcase,' I said, as one of the men started toward it.

" 'What?' the man demanded, as though not quite believing his ears.

" 'I have a cat in there,' I said. 'It has been sent to my wife by a relative in Jamaica and it's extremely wild. I fear if you open the suitcase it will get away —and what my wife would say to such an eventuality I shouldn't care to anticipate.'

"The customs officials looked at me, then at one another, sighed, and nodded their heads, smiling in malicious glee. One of them opened the suitcase, and then jumped back with a little cry of alarm. The cat, spitting and furious, paused only long enough to claw a bit of skin from his leg, and then raced up the gangplank with the speed of lightning.

" 'You see, gentlemen?' I said regretfully. 'Now I'm going to have a fine time catching that animal again.'

"Leaving them looking rather foolish I picked up the suitcase, went back on the ship, and directly to my cabin, where I packed away the silks. Then, feeling a trifle shaky, I swallowed a drink or two and went down the gangway again.

" 'Fortunately he went right back to my cabin,' I said to the officials. 'Now this time *please* be ready to hold him, gentlemen. I refuse to continue this game indefinitely.'

" 'Git along wi' ye,' growled the man who had been clawed. 'If ye haven't got a cat in there this time, no doubt it'll be something even worse.'

"And so I carried ashore my silks without further difficulties."

MR. ADAMS burst out laughing, though Captain Stoddard remained rather thoughtful, perhaps even a little troubled.

"A capital trick!" exclaimed the small man. "You health, sir!"

A new round of hot punch was ordered.

"But I don't understand, sir—" began the captain quietly.

"The development of this story is the strange part," said Mr. Ringler. "You see, gentlemen. when I reached home and unpacked my silks, gloating over them in private, I found that not only had I smuggled ashore what I knew I possessed, but something more. In the bottom of the suitcase lay an emerald."

An abrupt cracking sound broke from the captain's lips; in his preoccupation he had bitten his pipestem in two. "An emerald!" exclaimed Mr. Adams at the same moment.

"The largest and most beautiful emerald it has ever been my questionable pleasure to behold," said Mr. Ringler solemnly. "You may imagine my astonishment, gentlemen."

"Indeed!" muttered the captain, between his teeth.

"Now of course I had—still have—no idea of how the stone came into my possession. Many theories flitted through my mind: the most disquieting of which was that someone else had stolen the jewel, and, afraid of being caught, had slipped it into my suitcase, intending that I should suffer the consequences of his crime—or, perhaps, if I were successful in getting it through the customs to reclaim it later on.

In that case, of course, it occurred to me that the thief must be a desperate man and would scarcely hesitate to do away with me to regain a gem so exceedingly rare and valuable. Nevertheless, I thanked my fortunate stars that I had carried through the trick with the ship's cat, for otherwise the emerald would beyond a doubt have been discovered by the customs officials: and I, beyond an equal doubt, would have ended up in prison. Who would credit my story that I had no idea of the presence of such a jewel in my luggage?

"Now at least I stood a chance of escaping the machinations of the thief—for it was simply, I reasoned, a case of one man against another—though I was at a loss to know what to do.

"I should, doubtless, have turned the emerald over to the authorities with a manufactured story of having found it in the street—but who, possessing a jewel worth a fortune, could bring himself to throw it away again? Not I, at any rate. Perhaps I had been a merchant for too long.

"I have no intention of tracing the mental change that came over me thereafter in any detail, gentlemen—a few words will indicate its extent. I barred the door of my house, gave my servants strict orders to admit nobody who was unknown to them or to me, and otherwise took what precautions suggested themselves to my mind to avoid molestation—but months went by and nothing happened. I grew suspicious, cringing, almost a recluse. It seemed to me that the possession of that accursed stone had become a kind of persecution—and yet I was unable to bring myself to give it up. I was lost for hours at a time in contemplation of its incredible beauty and thought in gazing at it of green flame—if you can imagine such a thing."

"Yes," murmured Mr. Adams. "That's what I—"

"Eh?"

I whirled about in time to see a horse rearing before me—
I was struck by the hooves, fell, and lost consciousness.

"Nothing, nothing," said Mr. Adams hastily. "Forgive my interruption, sir."

"Willingly. I resume. One day, on the way to my place of business, I was, as usual at that time, more intent upon who might be following me than what dangers might lie before my nose, and, blundering across a street, I was brought up short by a sudden and horror-stricken yell. I whirled about in time to see a horse rearing before me—I was struck by the hooves, fell, and lost consciousness.

"When I revived I was in a hospital bed. My left leg, they told me, had been so thoroughly shattered by the accident that they had been obliged to amputate at the knee.

"You may find it incredible, gentlemen, but my first consideration was not the extent of my injuries, but the whereabouts of my emerald, which I had been carrying in a case in my pocket. It was, however, safe enough; and the authorities returned it to me directly. But now my possession of the stone was known to others besides the original thief, and I must admit that my peace of mind was destroyed. For months I lived in a state of terror. When at last the wound had healed sufficiently, I had a wooden leg made, in the use of which before long I became extremely proficient. I found myself perfectly capable of getting about the city with almost the ease I had experienced before my accident, and the knowledge that my handicap was slight served to raise my spirits.

"I had what seemed to me a brilliant idea, and, hollowing out a hole in the cup of the leg, I secreted the emerald there. Certainly nobody would suspect its presence, I thought. The difficulty was, of course, that no sooner had I entertained such a notion than I fancied that everyone I met was looking at me speculatively—wondering how to separate me from my wooden leg, which, to do it justice, was a work of art.

"My wife, gentlemen, is a woman of considerable tact and discernment. At first she had no idea of the cause of my mental condition and supposed it due to some temporary financial worry from which I should in time recover; but as the weeks went on and I became worse rather than better, she resolved to investigate for her own satisfaction. I had taken to talking in my sleep, to drinking more than was good for me, and before long she had gathered enough of the truth to be able to take steps. In short, she persuaded me to dispose of the thing—and I, seeing for the first time clearly to what sorry pass the possession of that emerald had brought me, rid myself of it with an indescribable sense of relief.

"I should, I suppose, be rather ashamed to tell a story in which I present myself so shabbily, but it comes as rather a comfort to talk about the events. I sold the emerald to an underworld character about whose dealings I harbored no illusions. He gave me less than half of what the stone actually was worth, but, as he argued, it was dangerous for him to handle an emerald of such value, and there was no way of telling into what trouble it might lead him. I was too overjoyed to be rid of the thing to quibble, and the sum he paid me enabled me to draw the threads of my business enterprises together and retire in comfort, to be relieved for the rest of my life of financial and economic worries.

"My story, unfortunately, goes on beyond that happy point a little further. Less than a week after I sold the emerald I was attacked by thieves. They did me little harm beyond stealing my wooden leg—but the assault showed me plainly that the story had been noised abroad, possibly by attendants at the hospital to whom in delirium I may have confided my plans, possibly by my servants, possibly by myself while in drink. At any rate, I understood myself now to be helpless, for all my premature sense of relief. Who, knowing of my ownership, would believe that I no longer held the stone in my possession? Not thieves, certainly. And I had no way to prove, because of the shady transaction in which I had indulged, that such was indeed the case—there were no papers, no receipts, nothing.

"On several occasions thereafter, gentlemen, I was assaulted; and on each occasion my wooden leg was stolen, to my considerable inconvenience and irritation. Twice I was lucky enough to recover the missing member, but in neither case was it a limb for which I had any real fondness or in which I experienced any great degree of comfort.

"And this evening, Captain Stoddard,

as I have already mentioned, once again I was the victim of footpads, to what physical danger and extreme unpleasantness you have already been witness."

"An amazing story," murmured the captain, after a silence.

"And yet—" said Mr. Adams softly.

"Sir?" demanded Mr. Ringler, apparently nettled at the reception his story was being accorded.

"I was merely about to remark that my own adventures would seem to have a strange bearing upon what you have told us, sir," Mr. Adams said meekly.

Mr. Ringler stared at him distrustfully.

"I believe we all are in need of more hot punch," suggested the captain, signaling to the serving maid.

"If my story has bored you, gentlemen, I apologize humbly," said Mr. Ringler, a little stiffly.

"Bored!" exclaimed the captain heartily. "Bless my soul, but nobody could call your tale boring, Mr. Ringler! Singular, to be sure, but fascinating—fascinating . . . Ah, there you are, lass. Bring us more punch, my dear, and one of your sweet smiles."

The girl served them and retreated.

"Mr. Ringler," said the captain. "Your health, sir!" They drank. "I have a number of things to say," he resumed, "that I think you will find of interest, gentlemen; but first, Mr. Adams, may I suggest that you volunteer the story of the events that led to the theft of your own leg? I am sure that it will be more in order at this time, since I, as host, ought to defer my own poor contribution until last."

"Gladly," said Mr. Adams.

He peered with a sort of malicious enjoyment at Mr. Ringler. Then he looked into the steam rising from his mug of punch as though seeking inspiration there, closed his eyes, and began.

STORY OF THE SECOND ONE-LEGGED MAN

"MY STORY, gentlemen, is neither so fascinating as that of Mr. Ringler, nor so long. In fact, were it not for several points that I deem of more than ordinary interest just at present, I should hesitate to tell it at all.

"The emerald already mentioned I am, alas, too well acquainted with myself."

Mr. Ringler made an abrupt movement and looked at the speaker intently, almost angrily.

"It is, as a matter of fact, that very stone to which I must attribute my own misfortunes," Mr. Adams resumed blandly, after a short silence. "I am by trade—or, perhaps, I should say I *was*, since, like Mr. Ringler, I have now retired—a jeweler. Indeed, I feel quite safe in saying that the greater part of the precious stones that have been bought or sold in this city I have had the pleasure of beholding, if nothing more. This was by reason of my ability to appraise and evaluate, and my advice was with considerable frequency requested on matters that other jewelers of the vicinity were unable to decide for themselves. During my career, I daresay that the wealth I accumulated was due almost as much to expert work for others as to the efforts I expended on my own business.

"One day about a year ago I was approached by a sly underworld man whom I had in the course of my years in the city on a number of occasions had pointed out to me as a notorious jewel-thief and smuggler. I was alone in my shop at the time—an opportunity for which, I understood as he spoke to me, he had waited the better part of a week—and thus perhaps a little frightened. As you see, I am a man whose size and physique are useless against direct assault. At any rate, I found myself forced to listen to a man whom under ordinary conditions I should not have permitted to cross my doorstep. This creature, after considerable hemming and hawing and beating about the bush, brought out of his pocket an emerald the like of which I had never beheld in my many years of dealing in precious stones.

" 'What'll you give me for that, mate?' he asked.

"I told him, of course, that I should give nothing for stolen goods under any conditions. He pretended to be outraged, and for an awful moment I thought I should inevitably be knifed, but at last, controlling himself, he protested that he had come honestly by the gem, that I would be surprised if he told me from whom he had purchased it, and that I

could have it for the sum which he himself had paid. This last gave me to think. In the first place, where could he have gathered an amount sufficient to purchase a gem such as even rich men might despair of owning?"

"Why not?" growled Mr. Ringler. "The man was a thief, wasn't he?"

"Sir?"

"I beg your pardon."

"But I knew, of course," resumed Mr. Adams with a slight smile, "that our underworld characters are frequently men possessed of a wealth so vast that we honest people can only regard them with awe, as beings outside our ken. So, in ordinary curiosity, I asked him what he requested as a price. He mentioned one which, I admit, was less than half the true value of the stone, but which, even so, I thought at first must have represented a considerable mark-up from the purchase. Later I was no longer so sure—the man, with the inexplicable superstitious beliefs of his class, was sincerely afraid of the emerald, and might even have accepted a loss in his desire to be rid of it, though it has never been my wont to haggle. I wondered what dolt could possibly have permitted it to leave his hands at so small a—"

"Sir!" exclaimed Mr. Ringler.

"Your pardon, sir," said Mr. Adams humbly. "I but state my feelings of that time."

"May I ask," said Mr. Ringler gratingly, "what that figure was?"

"That, sir," replied Mr. Adams, "must be considered a professional secret. To resume: The stone intrigued me. Its beauty, as you so truly expressed, sir, was that of a green flame. I cannot pretend to excuse myself, but years of dealing with beautiful gems had given me a natural appreciation of the emerald before me, and—in short, I purchased it."

There was another silence. Mr. Ringler drummed on the tablecloth with his fingers, and the captain, watching the little man in evident perturbation, coughed.

"I do not attempt to justify my action," said Mr. Adams. "Others have come to know of it and consider it smart trading. I myself think it rather shameful; but such was the effect of that stone on one's imagination that I was completely unable to resist its appeal. At the time, for all I knew, it was stolen property—and of course I still have no way of telling that originally it was not, though nothing I ever read or heard discussed suggested that anyone had lost such a prize. One would have expected its disappearance to have gained world-wide notoriety, but nothing reached my ears, either then or later—and certainly I knew as much about gems as any person in this city and might have received news of it, if anybody did.

"Well, I joyed in possession, but was naturally afraid to display my treasure publicly. After a time, however, I became distinctly uneasy. Perhaps, I thought, the little man had sold the stone to me only with the idea of pocketing my money, and was planning later to steal it back again. There had been no bill of sale and thus I never could prove my ownership. Or, even worse, perhaps he was genuinely glad to be rid of the thing but had notified some of his associates of its whereabouts, and they were biding their time to take it away from me. Though the stone was in the safe in my shop, it seemed to me that I was risking the savings of a good many years by leaving it there. My shop was too vulnerable. Better, I thought, to have it about my person. So I took to carrying it about with me, wrapped up in an old kerchief, wherever I went.

"As you have so ably told us, Mr. Ringler, having an object of that sort in one's possession scarcely makes for comfort or enjoyment of life. I went skulking about the streets like a criminal, afraid of my own shadow.

"ONE evening, as I was returning to my lodging, I thought I noticed a man following me. Before long the notion became a certainty. When I turned, he turned—there was no ridding myself of the fellow. In desperation, I dodged into a lodging house at some distance from my own, thinking he could scarcely dare to hound me there, sure, indeed, that he had failed to detect my sudden swerve into the doorway. In horror I watched him turn off and start up the front steps. I fled to the second floor; he followed—to the third; still he continued after me. At length I found myself on the roof of the building.

"Strangely enough, I was fated never to

In my panic I simply stepped over the edge of the roof, and fell.

discover whether or not he pursued me even there."

Mr. Adams paused to take a sip of punch, and this time the silence lasted so long that Mr. Ringler finally suggested, "And then?"

"I had never been in love in my life, gentlemen," said little Mr. Adams surprisingly. "I had been, I daresay, so engrossed in my work that the more tender emotions, alas, had passed me by."

"Your story, sir, is—" began Captain Stoddard softly.

"A thousand apologies," Mr. Adams said, entirely unabashed. "I hasten to the conclusion, though I assure you that my apparent disgression is of importance to the history of the emerald.

"I fell from that roof, gentlemen. It was growing dark, and in my panic I simply stepped over the edge. Fortunately, a line had been stretched across the space between that building and the next, presumably for the purpose of drying clothing, and that broke my fall—otherwise I should no doubt have been killed outright. Not only did the rope save my life, but it changed the direction of my fall, so that I was whipped like a ball through an open window into a room below, where, striking the floor with great violence, I lost consciousness.

"When I awakened I was lying in a strange bed, my left leg cut off at the knee. A young woman was tending me, a young woman of so amiable and sweet a disposition that I felt my heart immediately enthralled, and I wished it still were possible for me gracefully to have sunk down on both knees before her in—"

"Three more mugs of punch, lass!" roared the captain, interrupting rather rudely.

"We were married," resumed Mr.

Adams, glancing at him a little bitterly. "She told me how I had broken my leg between ankle and knee in no less than eleven places, and how the doctors had removed the shattered member before I was aware of what they were up to. The intimacy of this conversation seemed to cement a bond between us."

"I don't doubt it," put in Mr. Ringler, politely.

"It was she who persuaded me ultimately into selling the emerald again," said Mr. Adams, after staring at him for a few moments. "We could never be happy, she pointed out, with that accursed stone between us. And so, to one of the wealthiest men of the city, at a fair price, I gave up the stone—the most beautiful thing I have ever beheld in my life. Except, of course, for my wife, gentlemen. But who could refuse to give up one gem for an even finer second?"

"Ugh!" exclaimed Captain Stoddard.

"I beg your pardon, sir?" Mr. Adams said frostily. "You were about to say . . . ?"

"Nothing, nothing," said the captain hastily.

"One might suppose that to be the happy conclusion to my tale, but it was, alas, by no means an ending. Tonight makes the eighth occasion upon which I have been assaulted and beaten by footpads and thieves who apparently believe that I still retain possession of the stone. Damme, Mr. Ringler, but I suspect I have you to thank that they believe me to be carrying the thing about in my wooden leg—such an expedient never occurred to me. Nor until tonight could I fathom, after the attacks, why they should have stolen my artificial limbs, though one of them was of carved ivory. Too heavy for comfort, of course, but excellent on formal occasions."

"But the gentleman to whom you sold the emerald," said the captain reflectively, "surely must have known the danger of owning so remarkable a stone."

"Certainly," said Mr. Adams. "But how many men, sir, do you fancy would credit such a wild tale without personal experience? I made no secret of my feeling toward it or how I came to own it—that feeling, however, I refused to allow to influence a purely business deal, and the gentleman paid, as I remarked before, a fair price—though by no means what the stone would have brought in an open market. My profit on the transaction, nevertheless, was sufficient to permit me to retire from business and contemplate a life of ease and quiet enjoyment—broken, of course, from time to time by these savage and ugly attacks. Like Mr. Ringler, I was unfortunate enough to make a secret sale, and I am, obviously, not at liberty to disclose the identity of my client. Thus, professional considerations render me powerless to prevent the recurrence of the outrages from which I have suffered and quite possibly will continue to suffer.

"The good that one gains in this life is, alas, too often counter-balanced by the bad."

At this moment the serving maid brought in three fresh mugs of punch, and the gentlemen drank thirstily.

"I recognize the obligations, sirs," said the captain, with a sigh. "I have no illusions about my ability to match your stories in dramatic interest and fascination, however—I am nothing but a rough seafaring man over whose uncouth exterior some social and educational graces have been lavished, as though quite by accident. What I shall have to say, nevertheless, may prove enlightening to both of you, though I am unable to guarantee, alas, that such will indeed be the case. My own affliction is of more recent vintage than yours, but, as you probably have by this time guessed, similar. It is why I stated earlier that the presence of you gentlemen was surprising to me."

Captain Stoddard, rising by grasping the edges of the table, stood, drawing back the tablecloth to disclose his left leg, which was, like those of his two companions, cut off at the knee. At his right foot lay a rude crutch—the section of a boathook.

"Aye," he resumed, seating himself again. "There is more here than appears on the surface. What seems to us to be the wildest coincidence may be, actually, the working of fate. In the singular chance that has gathered us together this evening, perhaps we are intended to become aware of a larger design. Let us look, gentlemen, into the very beginnings of this affair—for which, I must confess, I feel myself completely and helplessly responsible."

He paused, gathering the threads of the narrative together in his mind, and then, apparently unconscious of the odd manner in which the other gentlemen were glaring at one another, he entered upon his story.

THE SEA CAPTAIN'S TALE

"I SHALL endeavor to eliminate all unessential details from my narrative, for, though a man's accounts of his successes with the opposite sex may be of fleeting interest, they rarely have a vital bearing upon the true course of his existence."

"I beg to differ, sir," put in Mr. Adams heatedly. "I have just pointed out—"

"By your leave, Mr. Adams," said the captain calmly. "I but generalize, and intend no personal reflections. My story begins in the south seas, and there, were I to pause for unnecessary recollection, we might remain until morning.

"Ship captains have, in the discharge of their duties, to perform many actions that the landsman might consider immoral or dishonest. To satisfy the prince of one of the islands that I regularly visited, for example, I, as master of the *Lydia F. Durham,* was obliged to cut trade with another tiny kingdom. This spelled the economic doom of that particular land. I disliked doing it, but I had no alternative. The prince happened to rule over an island important to this country in its exports—to offend him would thus have been to the detriment of my native land, as well as to my personal danger. I complied with his request, and my ship no longer visited the second island. What became of the people who inhabited it I have no way of determining. As I say, it was an act which I am unable to condone, but one which I was unable to avoid.

"In gratitude for my compliance, the prince, Hamid, by name, presented me with an emerald more beautiful than any other jewel I have ever beheld."

The other two men sat up somewhat straighter, gave over glaring at one another, and looked intently at the captain.

"All the way home on that particular voyage I was dazzled by the beauty of that stone. I was enthralled by it, utterly indifferent to the ports of call that formerly had delighted me after the long days at sea. The trip around Cape Horn, a storm in the West Indies—they seemed trifles, and I discharged my duties automatically. There must have been something evil about the emerald, that it affected me so deeply, and I began to wonder why Prince Hamid should have presented me with a gift that could have purchased half his land. That aspect of the situation had failed to occur to me at first.

"I had heard, as have all other seamen, of precious stones that are supposed to carry a curse along with them, but naturally I never had paid any attention to such nonsense, nor had I ever anticipated the time when I might myself be embarrassed by just such an uncomfortable possession. But as we neared our home port I felt more and more strongly that here was something outside my experience. I was determined, nevertheless, to smuggle my emerald through the customs without paying a duty I could ill afford. Even though I realized that I should have no difficulty in disposing of the stone for a tremendous sum, if I were of a mind to sell it, I could see no good reason why its value to me should be cut by grasping and mercenary laws. I therefore pondered deeply over my predicament and ultimately decided upon a means of evading the inspectors.

"The ship's cat was, for one reason or another, ridiculously fond of me, though I never observed that it displayed affection for another human being aboard my vessel; and it was this creature that I determined to use for my own ends. It had long been my custom, as we neared port, to attach a large bell about its neck—a custom the origins of which I have forgotten but which I never failed to observe, inasmuch as the crew, hearing the tinkle of the bell, knew we were nearing home, and, in their superstitious way, would have been outraged were I to flaunt the habit I all along had followed. I was certain that once in port the cat would trail me down the gangway, would, indeed, pursue me until I summoned one of the men to take it back aboard the ship—and I should require only a few moments.

"Thus, after we had docked, and my personal effects and quarters had been searched, nobody would think of examining the cat, or of being surprised when it followed me off the ship.

"The morning before we came to port, therefore, I glued the emerald inside the bell that hung around the cat's neck. The sound of the tinkle was altered, but I scarcely thought that would be noticed. Nor was it. But that very morning the cat disappeared."

The captain paused. Mr. Ringler was trembling slightly, but said nothing; he now kept his eyes on the tablecloth.

"I was, of course, in a frenzy," resumed the captain. "A jewel worth the savings of several lifetimes had been snatched from under my very nose and I had absolutely no means—nor any time, I may add—of discovering who had been guilty of doing away with my pet. Nor could I fathom any reason for it. But there was nothing to be done, and in a murderous rage I brought the *Lydia F. Durham* safely to port, wishing, I must confess, that I had the strength of will to drive her into a ledge and drown everybody aboard."

Mr. Ringler shuddered a little and closed his eyes.

"After the passengers had gone ashore, I observed the cat, its fur standing on end, racing down the passageway toward my cabin, paying no attention to my sudden and rather panic-stricken calls. Eventually I coaxed it to me, but it had obviously been badly frightened, and I experienced some difficulty in holding the beast to examine it. Needless to state, the emerald was gone.

"I pass over my sensations of those moments, gentlemen—they are sacred to me. If ever I should discover the man who thus had served me, I thought, no lingering death I might devise would be too horrible for him, nor too sweet for me to contemplate."

"Perhaps I was guilty of a certain amount of fantasy in my story," said Mr. Ringler hoarsely, his face slightly pale from the amount of punch he had consumed.

"Hear me through, sir," said the captain, laughing in a rather ominous fashion. "I have no intention of boring either of you gentlemen with an interminable story—nor shall I attempt to varnish the simple and inescapable truth.

"For several days after reaching port I was a madman. I say that advisably, and after a great deal of reflection. I drank to excess—sinned in every way known to the calendar. At last, when I put out to sea again, I was so exhausted that I looked back on the immediate past in dismay. What, I thought, would it profit me to drive myself to a fool's grave out of fury and material frustration? I had never really owned that emerald—it had been nothing but a gift of questionable value. Perhaps I was well away from the effect of a curse.

"The sea, gentlemen, is in my estimation the only place for a man of my character. In the sea he finds life, death, love, his own state of being. Before long, as time is measured, I became myself again. The winds, storms, calms, ports—all helped to restore me, and the *Lydia F. Durham* soothed my fancies with the tactful understanding of a tender and sympathetic wife.

"And when at last I reached the island whence the emerald had come, I asked Prince Hamid about its history—inquired so matter-of-factly that he appreciated my indifference and admitted that it was a magic gem; it was both a lucky stone and an unlucky one, and only those who gained by it also discovered its evil qualities. He offered, this being the case and his own fortune standing therefore in no danger of the curse, to buy it back from me at a fair price, as his people had been displeased by his giving away what they considered a sacred gem, but he was not overly surprised to find that I no longer had it, and seemed to think me rather fortunate to have escaped its influence. But, he added, it had a way of foreseeing events, so that one might become the victim of its malice before he attained to its benefits. I forebore to inquire what good it might be able to do a man whose very death could be attributable to its possession; but I felt myself well out of a dangerous and perhaps horrible situation.

"Upon my return home I was well satisfied. The voyage had been a highly successful one, our cargo was rich, the number of passengers we carried from port to port above the usual number. Moreover, I supposed that I had heard the last of that damnable jewel, from the malignant influence of which, I now understood, I had been removed by some nameless and unappreciated benefactor."

MR. RINGLER, taking a deep breath, looked up at the captain. His expression was enigmatic, and with a hand that shook a little he drank up what remained of his punch.

"A most edifying story, Captain," said Mr. Adams, with malicious enjoyment. "I can well understand how—"

"But, sir, by your leave, I have not as yet finished," said the captain, glancing at him curiously.

"I ask your pardon," muttered Mr. Adams.

"A friend of mine—a very old friend—is among the truly wealthy men of this city," continued the captain, looking now directly at the little jeweler. "I had neglected to visit him on the preceding trip, because of the debauchery and wildness into which I had thrown myself. Now, however, I waited upon him and was greeted with all the affection and kindness that I had come to expect at his hands.

" 'My dear Stoddard,' he said, 'I am delighted to see you again, and had I but known what day your ship would dock I should have been there to greet you. You will dine with me, of course?'

" 'With pleasure,' I said.

" 'And then we shall go to the opera, old friend, for which fortunately I have two tickets. But first let us go into my study. I have something for you to see.'

" 'Gladly,' I said.

"And in the study he took from his safe my emerald.

"For a matter of minutes, I suppose, I gaped at it, its green flame, as you gentlemen so well have put it, flashing and flickering before my eyes. My friend thought I was dazzled exclusively by its beauty, and allowed me time to collect myself a little. 'Isn't it gorgeous?' he asked at last.

" 'Unbelievable,' I managed to say. 'Where did you get it, George?'

"He laughed. 'That, I am afraid, is a secret,' he replied. 'The owner—the oddest little fellow you ever saw—had certain scruples about its entry into the country, and though I naturally investigated thoroughly, I was unable to discover reason for supposing it to be illegal. We agreed to keep the transaction secret, however, and certainly I should wish no publicity that might lead to anyone's questioning my ownership. You can understand that.'

" 'Of course,' I said, my mind in a whirl.

"I determined, before the evening was over, to force the truth from him somehow—to discover who had stolen my jewel from me, what miserable creature had profited through handling it, and—"

"I fail to understand altogether, Captain," put in Mr. Ringler nervously. "If you had advertised your loss at once, had made no secret of it, had even proclaimed the robbery while at sea—"

"Those are good suggestions, sir," said the captain dryly. "They are, however, easily answered. I had no idea that my emerald had been stolen until we were almost in port; at which time I was too busy to conduct a search by myself. I could scarcely commission anyone else to do so, for if he succeeded in finding the cat for me, what assurance had I that he would not discover the jewel, as well, and, having done so, claim that nothing of the sort was to be found on the animal? What redress would I have—beyond the satisfaction of killing such a man with my bare hands and without the certainty that I was justified in doing so? After we had docked, could I, with the years of honorable dealing my name represented, force myself to confess a paltry trickery and be exposed as a potential smuggler? Money meant a great deal to me, I am free to confess, but not so much as my reputation. And then, once ashore, in the grip of a rage such as I never before had experienced, could I be expected calmly to sit down and reason out some way of recovering my property through additional chicanery? Seamen are generally forthright fellows, sir, and once they stoop to graft and deception you may be reasonably certain that they are only working their own ill. By the time I had recovered control of myself it was too late. My chance had slipped. Besides, I was then several thousand miles away.

"Dinner that evening at my friend's home was a nightmare, and though he noticed my preoccupation he was too tactful to allude to it. At the opera I managed to regain a temporary disinterestedness and realized that I had been blaming *him* all along for something that was by no means his fault. How asinine to transfer

I half dragged, half carried him out of the building to the street.

my own culpability to his shoulders! I felt that I should like to ask his pardon then and there, but of course the circumstances would have made such a scene ridiculous.

"THE opera that evening was *Orfeo,* for which I have a great fondness, but I was unable to concentrate on the beauties of the music, for my mind was occupied exclusively with the beauties of the emerald lying in my friend's safe.

"That was the night, you gentlemen will recall, that the opera house burned. The fire occurred during the second act. Quite suddenly there were screams in the auditorium, and during a short period of mental bewilderment I was unaware of what they portended. But then, abruptly, the entire audience was in a panic.

"Even today I am unable to recall clearly everything that happened. The flames and the smoke—ironically fitted to that particular opera, certainly—seemed to erupt; one moment everything was normal, the next all was confusion. I have no recollection of carrying my friend to safety, but that, I later was informed, was what I did, after he had been overcome by the smoke. I half dragged, half carried him out of the building, to the street, just as the façade collapsed. He escaped without a scratch. My own left leg was pinned

beneath a falling block of stone, and though I was saved from further harm by others who had already left the building, my leg had to be amputated at the knee.

"Thus it was, gentlemen, that I came back into possession of the emerald. My friend presented it to me while I was still in the hospital. 'I saw how you admired it,' he said, 'and though it may seem a little offensive of me to offer you a gift for saving my worthless life, I should like you to have it, old friend.'

"He was deeply moved, gentlemen, and upon my honor there were tears in his eyes as he spoke. Was ever man faced by a situation more ironic? Somehow I managed to stammer out appropriate words of gratitude for the gift of my own jewel, regained at the cost of my own left leg.

"As I lay there recovering from my injury, I thought over what Prince Hamid had told me. Quite possibly I had already experienced the ill of that damnable emerald, but I could for the life of me see none of the good.

"And more trouble was to follow. Once out of the hospital I began to go about on a wooden leg. I was told that considerable time would have to elapse before I could expect to navigate successfully, but when one is trained at sea, gentlemen, he learns to manage despite pain and discomfort. In a matter of weeks I was thoroughly proficient at the art of walking in my new style. And again, bitter and unhappy, I fell into dissolute ways. Perhaps it was then that others learned my story—and it must have spread into the underworld of the city and made me a marked man for the thieves and footpads who inhabit our streets. But that final fling of wantonness, gentlemen, cured me—I saw that I should have to mend my ways, for good and all.

"It never occurred to me, either, Mr. Adams, to conceal the stone in my wooden leg, and, consequently, even after repeated attacks, when I swam back to consciousness to find another limb missing, I failed to understand what lay behind such a singular outrage."

"But the stone—" whispered Mr. Ringler.

"Ah, yes. To be sure, sir—the emerald. I sold it, gentlemen—sold it almost immediately after my release from the hospital to an acquaintance of mine toward whom I have always felt a unique mixture of contempt and envy. I daresay that the money I received for the stone was less than half of its actual value, but it was sufficient for me to retire comfortably and live a life of relative luxury."

"This sort of thing, I fancy, might continue almost interminably," said Mr. Adams softly, after a silence. "In my mind's eye I see an endless procession of gentlemen of middle age, all of whom have had their left legs cut off at the knee. There is, alas, no conclusion to the relentless progress of fantasy."

Captain Stoddard chuckled unexpectedly, his eyes twinkling. "Let us refill our mugs," he suggested. "Life is still ours to enjoy, even though each of us happens to be lacking a part of the body with which nature saw fit to endow us, and this evening has been, in an unusual way, quite delightful."

The punch mugs were refilled, but there was small trust in evidence as the three gentlemen drank to one another's health. Each face betrayed a rather humorous wariness, as though each of the gentlemen concerned suspected the other of pulling his remaining leg.

"A plain tale is like boiled beef without mustard," said the captain, after a long and somewhat embarrassed period of silence.

"Do you venture to suggest, sir—" said Mr. Ringler, turning on him with a well-assumed display of temper.

"Your pardon, sir!" exclaimed Captain Stoddard. "Nothing was farther from my intention. I merely desired to point out that the experience of any one of the three of us in connection with the emerald, while dramatic and intriguing, is incomplete in itself; and yet even now, when our stories have all been told, there is something lacking."

"Precisely," put in Mr. Adams. "A conclusion."

"But though the hour is late, our heads perhaps slightly turned by this excellent punch," continued the captain, "who can tell what will happen next? Perhaps we still are to be vouchsafed the conclusion of which you speak, sir. Perhaps—"

At that moment the clock over the fireplace near the street door struck the hour.

MIDNIGHT

WITH the striking of the clock the door opened again and a seaman entered—a young, stocky man, who stood firmly on both feet. He looked about the room and finally summoned the maid who had been serving the captain's table. After a question, she pointed toward the three gentlemen, and the seaman came directly toward them.

"Gentlemen," he said, bowing, "your servant."

"Good evening, sir," said the captain mildly. "May I be of service?"

"I am seeking Captain Stoddard, sir."

"I am he."

"Delighted, Captain. I am Rogers, first mate of the ship *Serpentine.* I have been commissioned by her master to deliver a message to you, sir."

"Indeed?" murmured the captain. "I had anticipated seeing him in person. However, Mr. Rogers, your message—"

"Captain Peters' compliments, sir, and he has disposed of the object to Prince Hamid for twice what you have received."

Mr. Adams, with an abrupt movement, overturned his punch mug, which, fortunately, was empty; Mr. Ringler turned pale and nervously drummed on the tablecloth with his fingertips. Captain Stoddard looked at them piercingly for a moment with his sea-blue eyes.

"You hear, gentlemen?" he asked, smiling a little. "From a disinterested source we have been furnished an artistically satisfactory conclusion to our combined adventures—the wheel is come full circle. Moreover, our separate and individual contributions have received, as it were, confirmation."

"Confirmation!" muttered Mr. Ringler faintly. "Yes—of course. But—damme! Confoundedly warm in here, Captain, is it not?"

He mopped his forehead rather feverishly.

"Do you happen to be aware of the contents of this punch, Captain?" demanded Mr. Adams. "It has made me feel—ah—a little giddy, I do declare."

"I fear that neither the heat nor the punch will serve as adequate vehicles for escape from the present situation," said Captain Stoddard thoughtfully. "The strangest thing about a story like ours, gentlemen, is its insistence upon recognition as an entity. Thus, if certain facts are required to round it out, in one way or another we may be certain that those facts will be furnished, with or without regard for what is generally recognized as truth. Once we have allowed ourselves to become a part of legend, sirs, we cannot ever again be free of the power of legend. If Cleopatra were proved to have died of old age, posterity would go on believing in the asp. And rightly so. In our fable, gentlemen, we are both the perpetrators and the victims."

"Forgive me, sir, if my message has affected you unpleasantly," said the mate, looking at the three gentlemen in bewilderment. "I have no knowledge of its meaning—I am merely carrying out my orders."

"And most efficiently," said the captain cordially. "Please to join us, sir, in a mug of punch. Mr. Rogers—Mr. Ringler, Mr. Adams."

The two gentlemen murmured uneasy acknowledgment, and Mr. Rogers sat with them while they were served fresh mugs of hot punch.

"How is it, sir?" asked the captain at last, "that Captain Peters fails to appear in person to gloat over such a sea-driven old wreck as I, and to be paid the bottle of champagne that is his right and is even now on ice, awaiting his pleasure?"

"Why, sir, the captain has been taken off to the hospital for observation and possible treatment," replied Mr. Rogers.

"Ah?"

"Yes, sir. Captain Peters went bathing in shark-infested waters, against the advice of his crew, and was injured. We performed surgery on him, though none of us knew much about it. The doctor who examined him aboard ship after we docked, however, thinks that all will be well."

"Delighted to hear that," murmured Captain Stoddard. "His left leg, I presume?"

"Why, yes," said the mate, in astonishment. "How did you guess that, sir?"

"'Twas no guess, Mr. Rogers," said the captain, reaching for his mug of punch. "It was a dead certainty."

WRONG LEAD

By JOHN RICHARD YOUNG

"I got this far." The killer's jet-black eyes bored into Abel Dodd. "You figure to stop me?"

ABEL DODD, wincing as the foggy autumn dawn's chill fingers probed his old joints, backed creakily down the rickety ladder from the hayloft. As his scuffed high-heeled boots touched the clay floor of the livery barn, he heard the flat, deadly voice behind him: "One funny move, pop, and I'll blow your head off."

Abel Dodd, forgetful of his rheumatism, spun around. For a moment, in the gray half-light seeping in through the grimy windows, his eyes registered only a tall bulk standing there in the aisle between the stalls.

Then he glimpsed the dull wicked gleam of the big pistol pointed at him, saw the gaunt, snake-eyed young man holding the

gun. Beside the man stood an exhausted buckskin saddle horse, head down, legs spraddled shakily, its breath pumping through distended nostrils in gasps.

The gunman jeered, "Guess who I am."

His coarse black hair was plastered wetly to his narrow snake-like head; his ragged blue overalls were soaked dark. He must have ridden all night, Abel Dodd reflected, through the storm.

"Nobody won't have to guess who you are, kid," the old man said calmly. "That newfangled telephone contraption has put the news ahead of you. You killed two guards in that prison break yesterday. And now, looks like, you've killed your horse."

"He ain't the only one I've killed, nor them guards. How you reckon I got this nag, these here clothes?" The tall kid showed yellow teeth in a wolfish snarl. "I'll kill every lawman in Colorado that gets in range of me. Or anyone else who tries to stop me."

"Son, you ain't got a dog's chance of getting out of these mountains alive."

"I got this far." The killer's jet-black eyes bored into him. "You figger to stop me?"

"Me?" Abel Dodd's puckered dark eyes reflected mild pity. "Kid, you're on a wrong lead. You can't get away with it."

"They'll never put me back in the pen! I want a horse, the best horse you got, and no argument."

"I don't hold with helping murderers," Abel Dodd murmured.

"Right pious, ain't you?" the kid sneered. "Maybe you'd like a gut full of lead." The old man heard him cock the gun. "I said the best nag you got! Trot him out."

"Son, any man who abuses a horse like you've abused that buckskin ain't fit to handle a good horse."

"I hate horses! And horsemen! You're both dumb. Quit this palaver. You walk ahead of me—and no tricks, pop! I'll just look over these nags myself."

ABEL Dodd recognized the menace in those lusterless animal eyes. With the gun touching his back, he moved slowly along the aisle while the gaunt killer at his heels scrutinized each of the dozen horses which were munching hay in the stalls.

Before a loose-box near the door the gunman stopped. It was the only stall with a nameplate on the door, a small bronze plaque labeled in raised letters: *FLASH McQUE.*

"So," the killer said, staring at the massively muscled bay stallion chewing hay, "the famous Flash McQue. Even the cons in prison knew about him. Never beaten in a race, huh?"

"Never run in nothing but races," the old man said. "Running on a track is all he knows. He's all I've got left—"

"Bring him out." The gun-muzzle sharply prodded Abel Dodd's spine. "I'll give the old nag his fill of running."

The bay stallion nickered affectionately as the old man led him reluctantly out into the aisle.

The gaunt killer had stripped saddle and bridle from the exhausted buckskin. Grasping the stallion's halter, he waved his gun peremptorily at the gear lying on the floor.

"Get that saddle and bridle on him. Hump yourself!"

Meekly the old man obeyed. "It's no use, son," he warned. "You're on the wrong lead—"

"Wrong lead, hell! I know this country blindfolded."

"Then you know the rains've washed out the trail this side of Indian Fork! I know you'll head west," the old man said. "There's no other way you can dodge, in these mountains. So remember, kid, this side of Indian Fork you got to cut sharp right, through Cutback Pass."

The kid's thumb tightened over the gun-hammer. "You trying to run a blazer on me? There ain't no Cutback Pass, that I know of."

"You been in the pen too long, son. The mining company blasted Cutback Pass through solid rock to cut twenty miles off the freight line. You can't miss it—a hairpin right turn just this side of the Fork."

"And you're telling me—for why?" The outlaw eyed him narrowly.

"Because if you miss that sharp right turn," Abel Dodd said, "you'll go tumbling down the side of a mountain—and

I don't want old Flash here to end up in a ravine with his legs busted. Better you kill him running than he should suffer and starve."

"Hand over what money you got," the outlaw ordered. "I'll need it." He flung the old man's empty purse to the floor in disgust. "Nine dollars!" he sneered. "You and your wrong leads! Where has being on the square got *you?*"

Abel Dodd rolled open the barn door. In the wet gray dawn the stallion's breath steamed as the fugitive led him outside. The livery was located on the western edge of the tiny mountain town and at this hour not another soul was astir.

"Go easy on him, kid," Abel Dodd said as the gunman mounted with the hopeless awkwardness of a man whom no amount of training would ever make a horseman. "Old Flash will carry you till he drops."

"Damn right he will!"

Suddenly in the soggy dawn stillness they heard distant hoofbeats approaching from the far end of the town. The outlaw whipped his heavy pistol down on the stallion's haunch.

With a bound that nearly unseated his rider the great racehorse shot out into the mist.

"Wrong lead, son," Abel Dodd murmured, watching him out of sight. "You're on the wrong lead."

He had his own mount saddled when the heavily armed posse on lathered horses drew rein at the open door. Sheriff Jud Peters, gray with fatigue, snapped, "Where is he, Dodd? You'd better talk turkey."

Abel Dodd mounted his horse.

"Follow me, Sheriff. I reckon I can show you where he is."

Beside the trail where it doubled through Cutback Pass they found the kid's smashed body, sprawled head-first among the jagged, blasted boulders. Nearby stood the bay stallion, mud-smeared, lame.

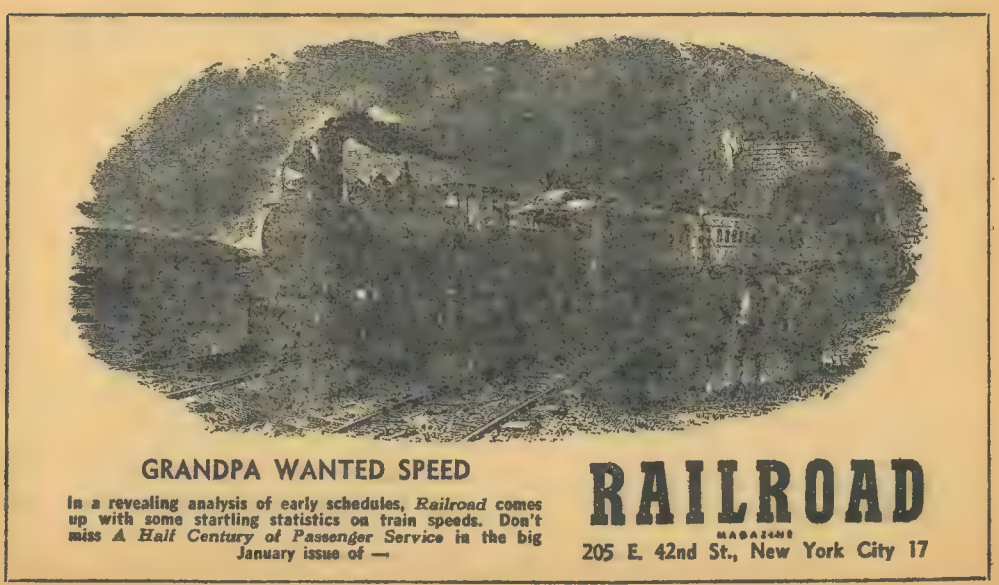
"Sheriff," Abel Dodd said, "what happens when a horse running with his left leg leading tries to make a sharp right turn?"

"It's a miracle if he don't crash, mebbe break a leg."

"Well, Flash ain't never been nothing but a racehorse; he's so used to running to the left, he hardly knows how to run to the right. So when the kid hit this hairpin turn at top speed, he was on the left lead."

"And he wasn't horseman enough," the sheriff commented, "to know it was the wrong lead."

"No." Abel Dodd sighed heavily. "He was no horseman. He was just mean and cruel, and a killer . . . God forgive me that he was my son."


GRANDPA WANTED SPEED
In a revealing analysis of early schedules, *Railroad* comes up with some startling statistics on train speeds. Don't miss *A Half Century of Passenger Service* in the big January issue of —
RAILROAD
MAGAZINE
205 E. 42nd St., New York City 17

INVINCIBLE ARMADA

A FACT STORY

By
ARTHUR S. RIGGS

FOR downright misery, privation, bad provender and very short rations at that, brutal discipline and a man's life frequently expendable at the whim of his commanding officer, the armed Spanish galleys of the 1500's and later left absolutely nothing to the imagination. Chroniclers, priests, admirals, generals, King Philip II himself and scores of others testify to conditions so bad that the tragic story of the Invincible Armada seems the entirely natural outcome of a system humanly indefensible.

Galleys were a very ancient invention as both coastguards and means of convenient utilitarian punishment for criminals and generally worthless vagabonds the Spaniards eventually called "by-godders," from their favorite oath of *Por Dios:* hence, *pordioseros,* by-godders. Spain had her first taste of galley life from the Moors who overran the Peninsula in the eighth century; and for centuries afterward the privateers and pirates of the south shore of the Mediterranean harried Spanish commerce, often in whole fleets, commanded by able and ferocious fighting seamen. Emperor Charles V enlarged the galley squadrons and made unrelenting war on the African coast, and Philip II, fighting on every side and worried at every turn, built up his squadrons in both Europe and the Americas until they made a formidable total no raiding power could disregard.

Galleys were long, shallow draft, narrow, horribly overcrowded craft intended not to go to sea but to patrol harbors and

DECORATION BY ROGER L. THOMAS

alongshore, anchoring in port at night and depending for their fighting qualities upon their speed and maneuverability. They ran generally to less than forty tons burden, and the average complement was ninety, including the slaves at the oar, criminals serving out time sentences, apprentices learning the seaman's trade, and officers. Of the average entire crew, 14 were professional sailors, 30 were soldiers, 42 oarsmen, and the rest officials of varying grades, not counting the "General" or squadron commander, and certain others, carried as occasion demanded. Galleys when on Mediterranean duty away from their home ports, carried members of the King's or Emperor's Privy Council, chaplains extraordinary, special couriers, functionaries of all sorts, and at times considerable bodies of troops. How they managed it is a mystery, and the discomfort for all hands was acute, including the high officials of the afterguard. The craft were so small that except for the after cabins, there was literally not one square inch devoted to sleeping quarters. Sanitary arrangements there were none. The cooking equipment boasted no real kitchen nor any safe means of using fire. The men of the crew and the troops slept, vomited, thrashed and cursed piled together like a mess of kittens or puppies, often for weeks at a time under a raging sun by day and chilling breezes by night.

BRUTALITY to the crew was the order of the day in sixteenth century galleys. And if a man dared to complain—! The most effective type of "cat" did not have its tails knotted at the ends. The whole cat was soaked in salt water before use. Dried out, each tail was kind as a sharp-edged length of spring steel, and a good many commanders liked to see it used on the poor devil triced up in the gangway, with stoppers on everything but his screams. A few instructed their boatswains to keep the victim conscious and draw out the punishment as long as possible, but to cut him to ribbons and then knock him out with the final blow. Salt water or vinegar in his raw wounds soon brought him around to a groaning agony in which every move was torture. Yet duty was to be done, and regardless of condition, he worked—or the cat clawed him again savagely.

Food on the whole was better in the galleys than it was in the bigger ships of the oceanic fleets, whether naval or merchant. The galleys, anchoring in port practically every night, could almost always get fresh meat or fish of a sort, but the ships bound for the Indies or the Philippines had a bad time of it. Water was a vital matter, and even in the galleys it was usually so bad you shut your eyes and held your nose when you drank just as little as would quiet your raging thirst. After about three days in the wooden casks used as containers, a crust of bugs and other animal life formed over the surface, and long green whiskers of slime sprouted on the sides and bottoms. The stench was something! The stuff was both food and drink, if you could stand it.

Hardtack not unlike what we have today was a main source of curses. Let the chaplain of Emperor Charles V, who had to follow his imperial master to Africa and all around the Mediterranean on a galley, tell some of the delights of galley life. This gentleman was Don Antonio de Guevara, Bishop of Mondoñedo, member of the Emperor's Privy Council, and a highly outraged, very seasick, thoroughly disgruntled official. Nothing pleased him in the galleys, so he remarked dryly in his record upon his "disgusts." The novelist Alemán backs him up by making a character exclaim: "Life in a galley is truly a life in hell; there is no difference between the one and the other, except that one is temporal and the other everlasting."

The *bizcocho* or hardtack was, according to Bishop Mondoñedo, "tapestried with cobwebs, black, full of maggots, hard, gnawed by rats, small and badly soaked. I advise the inexperienced passenger that unless he has the judgment to snatch it quickly out of the water, he will fare ill indeed."

Just a few paragraphs farther along he scratches himself vigorously and writes: "All the fleas which leap about the planks, all the lice in the seams, and all the bedbugs hiding in the crevices are common to all. If anyone appeals from this privilege, presuming to be very clean and nice, I prophesy that from now on if he raises his hand to his neck or to his knapsack, he

will find more lice in his doublet than coins in his pocket."

Any man who survived the galleys long enough became so tough and venomous that the bugs refused to bother him, but until then he writhed and scratched in his sleep. He dared not take off a single article of clothing, either, for if he did, in the morning it would be gone. Anyway, except for the higher officers, there was no bedding but garments each man wore.

In general the plan of the Spanish galley was much like that of the old-timers. A rather narrow fighting catwalk ran around the length of the ship just inside the gunwales above the heads of the rowers. They sat on maindeck benches which ran athwartships. Fore and aft was another, a central, catwalk, on which the boatswain with his whip was ever alert to cut a laggard into full action, while the drummers and fifers aft gave the beat for the oars. The forecastle was a fighting platform, and in the later galleys carried a gun as large as could be handled by the vessel. The sterncastle varied considerably in size and character, and below the maindeck, where the oarsmen sat, were the ship's stores, cargo, munitions, etc.

Quite generally the reinforced stem terminated in a heavy beak or spur for ramming, and between oars and huge lateen sails, the galley was exceedingly fast in her class. The tactics were mainly those of the chase, and of swift maneuvering until the opportunity came for ramming. Galleys hunted in pairs and flotillas, and where two of them could isolate an enemy craft, they attacked from opposite sides, rammed if they could, and then with much noise and fury, boarded. The soldiers were armed with pikes, hangers, arquebuses, muskets and at times hand grenades. Besides the ship's guns that hurled round shot, often galleys carried "stone throwers," huge mortar-like stubby cannon that lobbed over round stones weighing to 500 pounds.

The guns were almost as terrifying to their crews as to the enemy, and three was always the danger of setting the galley on fire or blowing her up because sparks, flaming wads, backfires, and whatnot constituted a serious menace. The shooting was completely by guesswork, and did little damage usually from such an unstable platform. It did make a glorious noise and created unimaginable clouds of smoke. However, when a solid shot or a stone landed among the jammed-together oarsmen and soldiers, the havoc was frightful. Occasionally a solid shot tore through side or rail, and the splinter wounds resulting are better left to the imagination. Surgery was crude to the last degree, and a wounded man worth saving was held down—of course, after the fighting was over and there was time to attend him—by several huskies, while the surgeon hacked and sawed at him despite his screams and attempted struggles. That so many survived such butchery testifies to their toughness. Serious wounds relied upon maggots to eat up the pus and heal the sufferer. A survivor, perhaps minus a leg or an arm, received little more consideration after wounded than before. Every misery that humanity can support and go on living was a commonplace of galley life.

Nobody served in these vessels for pleasure. Beginning with the apprentice boys who had to sweat out their cubship to qualify as masters and pilots later on, to the high nobles who learned ship, squadron and fleet command by six months' training in these little "destroyer" patrols, everyone was fully conscious of serving in a branch which had been condemned by law to perpetual infamy.

RECRUITING for the galleys was often as blunt as the treatment of the unhappy crews. One of the Spanish viceroys of Sicily had the bad luck to lose most of his crews by mass desertion when his squadron came into port, and the island was being overrun with the choicest scoundrels even Sicily had ever seen. But the viceroy was equal to the emergency. "He issued an edict instituting games to celebrate the coming Easter, and offered a gold *escudo* as a prize to anyone who could jump certain determined distances.

"When the day of the fiesta came, an enormous crowd attended, and those who are usually seen in the doorways of churches displaying withered arms and horrible incurable ulcers, presented themselves to contest for the prizes as clean and healthy as the young Greeks of the

Olympic Games. Contest after contest was held, and many won prizes. To each one was religiously given the golden coin, with only the requirement that he state his name. No one objected to that. But the very next day every prize-winner was picked up and brought to the galleys, gaining a livelihood for ten years through simply having jumped well once."

Punishments for infractions of the harsh regulations aboard were severe. The royal instructions issued to the Count of Niebla as "Captain General of the Galleys of Spain" in 1603 included the following: "That you take much care in castigating blasphemy and the unmentionable crime. That you make the men confess, and preach the doctrine to them." In 1663 Don Enrique de Bazán y Benavides issued a proclamation to his fleet of galleys, the most striking paragraph of which said: "That no one may bring aboard, possess or sell smoking tobacco on pain of loss of a month's pay; if he be a forced man, one year more in the galleys, and if a slave, fifty of the cat in the gangway." For the really serious offenses the provision was deadly. "The soldier, sailor or oarsman who, against any person soever, puts his hand to his sword, dagger or knife or other weapon while aboard, dies for it. No person shall dare put his hand to his sword, dagger or other arm within sight of the Royal Standard, even with the pretext of making peace, on pain of death."

Discipline had to be maintained with an iron hand, and it was. Spain was obsessed by the dream of dominating the seas, and she bent her will ruthlessly to that end. Her galleys were her home guard, and were veritable hornets. That men could row and fight and cover themselves with glory when they did not fail miserably, is astonishing when we consider the rations they had, for a navy quite as much as any army, "fights on its stomach."

In the sixteenth century a ration consisted of "26 ounces of biscuit, 12 ounces of fresh meat when in Port where it can be had, and when navigating at sea, of bacon or salt meat, cheese or salted fish, which is ordinarily what is carried in a Galley, at six ounces to each ration, and half an *azumbre* [about a quart] of wine . . . and when they are given either fresh or salted fish, they shall also be given at discretion . . . under the supervision of a tally clerk of rations, oil and vinegar."

All this sounded excellent, but nothing was said of the condition of the various items.

In his study, "The Infirmities of Seamen," González remarked of the foul drinking water: "The lively impression (it) makes upon the multitude of nerves which form taste and smell later produces certain degrees of spasms which, if they unfortunately persist, do not fail to produce serious illness." He also observed that, "As heat and humidity predominate so efficiently in the interiors of our armed vessels, it follows that the precautions taken to conserve the goodness of provisions must be fruitless. The least moisture introduced into the storerooms of biscuit or hardtack and into the casks of other foodstuffs, penetrates these substances, softens them up and, working in conjunction with the heat, alters and corrupts them."

Whether in galley, galleon or ship of the line, going to sea in Spain's very best in the century after Columbus opened the New World to her, was so little inviting that it became the topic of many gibes and popular street songs. The girls had a scoffing word for the noisy gallant who boasted of what he would do overseas or on the sea, and sang:

"Don Juan se quiere embarcar;
las damas dicen que yerra;
que no es hombre en la tierra,
menos lo será en el mar."

"Don Juan would boldly go to sea;
The girls know better, for he's wrong:
When on dry land no man is he,
Much less at sea he'll get along."

By WALT SHELDON

When Etienne awoke, he saw that he was in a kind of cage made of bamboo logs lashed together. This cage reposed in the middle of a group of thatched and wattled huts—and a number of Warahala, including the chief, were gathered around him.

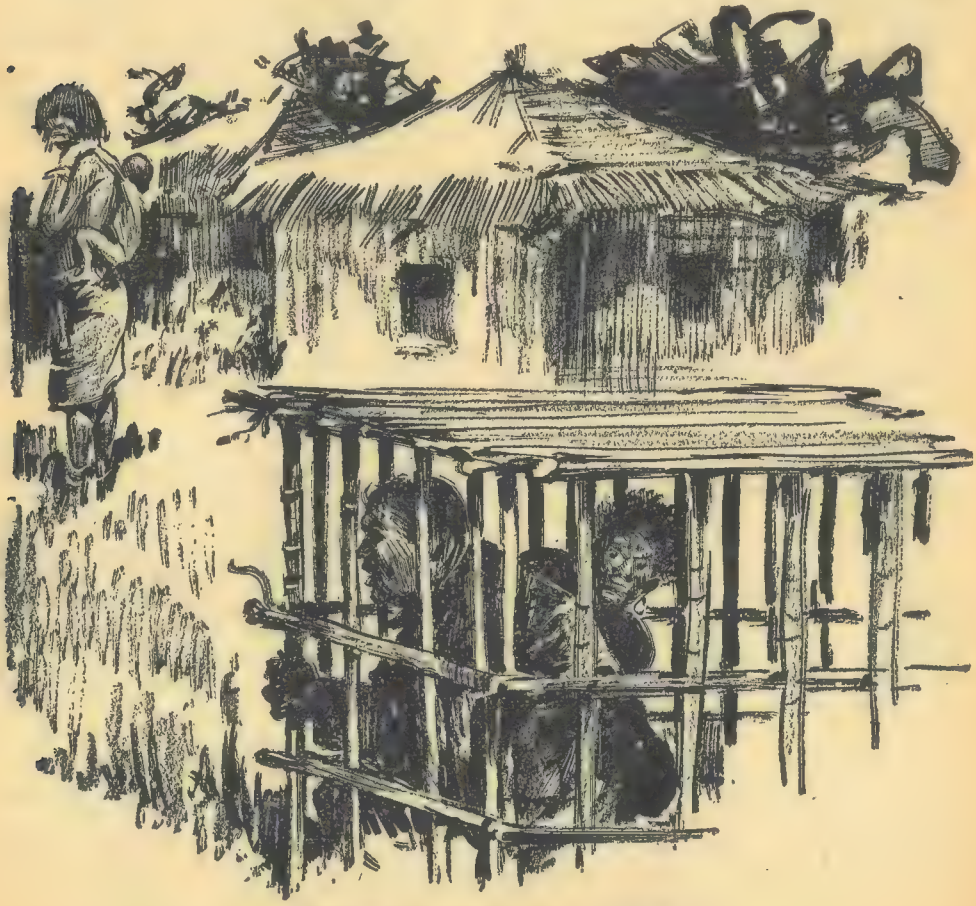
A BANQUET FOR THE BWANA

IT WAS skulduggery. One was forced to conclude that it was nothing less. Etienne Alphonse Latrouse spread his arms wide, then let them drop again.

"Consorts of jackals," he said to himself, "they have deserted me!"

They had. The clearing was empty and there were nothing but warm ashes where the cook fire had been. Holes from the tent pegs were still in the dark, moist earth. Etienne trembled. He should have suspected this; he should never have wandered off looking for herbs and spices—which he had been doing for the *benefit* of these barbarians, after all.

Etienne had come to French Equatorial Africa a good many months ago. A matter of the police—who incidentally were also barbarians for the most part. They had shown a motive in the killing of this



ILLUSTRATED BY FRANK KRAMER

fellow who held the mortgage on Etienne's restaurant in Paris. It was well-known that Etienne's restaurant meant more to him than the life of a mere landlord. The payment had been due. They had found the landlord with his head bashed in and his safe pilfered. Was that not then a motive?

In a way, yes, it was. But as much as anything Etienne had killed this fellow because he was the sort who would order Côte de Boeuf Rôti well-done—*well-done, mind you*—and then very probably drink Sauterne or Chablis with it instead of a red wine. A barbarian.

And then in Brazzaville a picture of Etienne had appeared on the fly-specked wall at the Prefecture, and a quiet little man in a dark suit and pince-nez had begun asking questions about Etienne around town. It had been necessary once more to make a departure. Etienne had paid these Americans to take him along on their hunting expedition; upon his return in several months this nonsense of his pursuit would doubtless be forgotten.

Etienne had attempted to make himself agreeable and to properly instruct these Americans. He had zealously supervised the cooking aboard the chugging little steamer that took them up the Congo, then the Ubangi, and then discharged them at Zongo, where the rapids began. Even on safari he had seen to it that no one dined improperly, achieving small miracles each day upon random game and canned rations. He had his own kit of spices and herbs. He found some in the jungle. And had they been grateful for this? No! This empty clearing and the jungle silence around him was his reward.

THERE was sudden movement in the leaves across the clearing, and Etienne's heart jumped. He reached for the bush-knife at his side. The flesh of his jowls became pale as white consomme.

A runty native stepped from the bush. Two others, only slightly taller, followed.

"N'Tambi!" said Etienne to the first one. "It is you!"

N'Tambi grinned, showing picketed teeth. In a way, he had been the black counterpart of Etienne on the expedition; quarrelsome, and given to stealing, he had been something of a nuisance. N'Tambi was a town and prison black, but he hadn't really been long out of the jungle. He said, "I take you back. *Bondela* say I take you back."

At first Etienne felt profound relief that he had not been entirely deserted. Then suddenly he remembered that the day before a mail runner had caught up with the expedition, and it began to occur to him that the others were sending him back for other reasons than his merely being a nuisance. The mail runner could have brought word that the police were after Etienne. Yes, that was undoubtedly it. Now they would be looking for him in Zongo, too.

He said, "Wait, N'Tambi." He lowered his bulky knapsack. It contained his spice kit, some wine, shaving implements, a sewing pack, and—ah, here it was—a map of French Equatorial Africa. Etienne studied the map for a long time before he looked up and said, "We will not go back to Zongo. We will head south to the river at Fort de Possel—"

"Zongo," said N'Tambi.

"No—it must be Fort de Possel."

N'Tambi pointed south. "In jungle Warahala live. Warahala eat black man, white man." He demonstrated by pretending to munch on his own forearm.

"We risk the cannibals?" said Etienne, lifting his brow. Then he shrugged magnificently. "Very well—we risk the cannibals!"

It did not take Etienne long to decide that the cannibals they risked were probably as nothing compared to the devastating stretch of jungle they found. N'Tambi insisted that they were following a trail, but Etienne could not see it. N'Tambi moved ahead, hacking with the bush-knife. Branches, creepers and thorns snapped back into Etienne's face. The insects did their part. There were those that buzzed, and those that hummed, and even some that snarled. There were leeches. There were lungfuls of hot moisture with every breath. There was the green, oppressive everywhereness of the jungle itself . . .

Etienne went on bravely. Belgian territory lay across the river from Fort de Possel, and since these barbarians of police saw fit to track him even into the jungle, he had no choice but this.

At meal halts Etienne did what he could with the provisions the expedition had allotted him. A sprinkling of marjoram helped the tinned beef, for instance—but on the whole, eating was a species of misery. On the third night, however, N'Tambi caught a small antelope. "Magnificent!" said Etienne. "There will be limitations, of course, but we shall see if we cannot make this into something resembling my *lièvre rôti a l'Allemande!*"

N'Tambi did not understand much of this, of course. He kept looking about him in a perturbed way and muttering, "Warahala." He had been doing that for some time.

So Etienne prepared the antelope. He rendered its own fat and delicately larded the *râble;* he swished it in soured canned milk, and made lemon juice from the powder in the concentrated ration. He found a jungle fruit which he tried first on N'Tambi, and when N'Tambi didn't die, he sugared it and used it. There was a little white wine left. From this, and from chevril, tarragon and chives, he made something close to a *Sauce Ravigote.*

It turned out to be not his usual magnificent creation—but it was at least palatable.

Etienne was bringing the last forkful of *Antelope du Bois a l'Allemande* to his mouth, when a dozen Warahala warriors stepped from the trees.

It was quite a surprise. It was so much of a surprise that Etienne failed even to look surprised—he simply stared up at them in those first few moments, in a blank, uncomprehending way. *Eh bien,* it appears that some black men have stepped from the trees. They are quite tall black men, and they frown considerably, and the one who steps before them and seems to be the leader is very fat and wears a leopard skin. He is a little of the shape of a large, juicy Morocco pear. One is almost tempted to wish to cover him with a Bavarois and set him in a *timbale*—

The big black pointed at Etienne. His voice was deep and heavy. *"Basi kwenza!"* he roared.

That brought Etienne from his trance. He'd picked up enough safari language to know that the black meant: *Enough!* Time to get down to business. Etienne could guess what sort of business. He scrambled to his feet quickly—for in spite of being plump, he had a certain grace about him—and he dashed in the other direction.

Another dozen Warahala emerged from the trees before him and blocked his escape. Etienne was struck over the head with a war club, and knocked unconscious.

WHEN he awoke, he saw that he was in a kind of cage made of bamboo logs lashed together, the corner posts driven into the ground. This cage reposed in the middle of a group of thatched and wattled huts. There was a terrible stench all about; refuse, garbage, rancid nut oil, sour goat's milk—the Saints knew what else.

A fire in a pit smoked away in the center of the clearing, and a number of Warahala, including the pear-shaped chief, were gathered around it.

Etienne's skull throbbed. A voice behind him said, "Bwana!" and set it to throbbing even more. Etienne turned, and saw that N'Tambi, and the other two porters were in the cage with him. Etienne groaned.

Then, abruptly, the chief and several other natives came to the cage and pointed into it and obviously discussed its occupants at great length. N'Tambi turned his skinny head and shoulders toward the chief and began a great wailing and babbling. The chief answered him with several sharp words.

"It is that you can speak to him?" Etienne said to N'Tambi. "That he understands you?"

"He knows some Bantu," N'Tambi muttered, keeping his eyes on the fat headman.

"Demand then at once," said Etienne, "that he release us in the name of the Republic of France!"

N'Tambi completely disregarded the order. It may have been that he did not even hear it.

One of the natives opened the cage, then. He did it very quickly, slipping a trick knot on the leather thong that held the door; two others dipped into the cage and dragged one of the screaming porters from it. The plumpest one. They headed him for the smoking pit.

Etienne's daze came not entirely from his throbbing head. He remained in it, and watched. His eyes were slightly bugged. Two natives emerged from behind a hut and they carried a blackened and battered petrol drum, with the top cut off. They hung this to a pothook on a crossbar by the fire. Other natives began to come from one of the paths into the jungle, and they carried wooden buckets and skins of water. This they poured into the hanging drum.

Etienne somehow found enough detachment to wonder if the victim was to go into the big pot, thus following the convention about such things. He turned to N'Tambi, who also watched, and whose eyes were also wide. "One is put into the pot?" he pointed.

N'Tambi answered in a hollow voice. "Man go in hot water. Skin come off. Then in hole. Hole hot from fire." N'Tambi shuddered. He couldn't go on any longer.

As a matter of fact, his commentary wasn't needed. The Warahala went ahead with their preparations before Etienne's eyes, before his glance that had not only a professional, but now a deeply personal interest in the proceedings. The porter was led off somewhere; quite clearly for a *coup de grâce*. The fire under the scalding pot was fed until it flamed high, so that the water would boil.

Women came along with armfuls of plantains, and began to lay them in the smoking pit.

Etienne shook his head slowly and clucked his tongue.

He watched the rest of it. He saw everything—he witnessed the whole process, from the moment the executioners returned with the dead porter to the time *it* was put into the smoking pit, prepared. Etienne would have thought that a sight such as this would have filled him with profound horror, but it didn't. It was too casual, somehow, and perhaps too much like a dream. Maybe the throbbing and swimming of his head helped make it seem so.

He was not even shocked, not even jolted within himself when the chief and his natives came again to the cage, and this time pulled both Etienne and N'Tambi from it. N'Tambi fainted and they had to carry him by the arms and shoulders. Etienne walked without help toward the other pits that were now being prepared. He didn't walk with his head high, or with the firm step of a martyr, but this much must be said—he did walk.

N'Tambi regained consciousness by the time they reached the pits, and he began to moan and wail. The fat chief and the other warriors looked at him in disgust.

"Silence, coward!" Etienne said to him sharply.

N'Tambi kept moaning, but somewhat more quietly.

And then, as the ones with the buckets began to replenish the water in the petrol drum, Etienne abruptly *was* filled with horror. But it was a strange horror—it had no connection with the fact that he had just seen a human being slaughtered and prepared for a feast. No, this was something else again. He turned once more to N'Tambi. "Now, look you," he said slowly, "I must say words to this Warahala chief. You must put them into his language for me!"

N'Tambi moaned again, but he seemed to understand, because he looked directly at Etienne and nodded.

Etienne said, "Ask him where is my knapsack. Tell him that if he brings it here I will show him magic of the sort he has never seen before!"

N'Tambi, in a trembling voice, relayed this to the chief. The chief at first scowled, and then lifted his scowl as he became obviously curious. He gave some orders, and the knapsack was brought from one of the huts. Etienne told them to open it and spread the little boxes and bottles they found there carefully upon the ground.

N'Tambi whispered in French, "You save you and me, Bwana? You make everything right?"

"Yes," said Etienne. "I make everything right."

He then proceeded to give directions. To the fat, pear-shaped chief and to all of his helpers they were puzzling directions, but that only made them more interesting. They were thoroughly and gravely discussed in muttered tones. After a while Etienne really got into the spirit of the thing, and beyond his mere monosyllabic indications he began to add a running lecture, which of course was not translated,

nor would have been understood if it had been.

"The secret of all cooking," Etienne said happily to his audience, "is stock. *There it is!* Always remember—*stock.* If one's stock is good, the rest may be accomplished. If one's stock is bad—" he touched his pinched thumb and forefinger to his lips, then threw them up and out—"it is quite hopeless to expect anything approaching a satisfactory result! This is the secret of French cooking, which means of course that it is the secret of *good* cooking! Now, then, for the required problem, we prepare the proper stock. *Fonds de Veau Blanc*—any other would be sheer lunacy."

There were missing ingredients, of course. There had to be. There was no shin of veal as a basis for the stock, but the chief did produce several used chicken skeletons. There were no carrots; Etienne settled for plantains, instead. There were onions. The clove to stick in each onion came from the contents of the knapsack. Etienne used the tops of the onions in place of the leeks he would have preferred. From his herb kit he added parsley, bay leaf, and a sprig of thyme.

"If allowances are made for circumstances," he said to everybody and nobody in general, "one may assume that it will be magnificent."

He had some trouble getting across the idea of time; it took much gesturing and circumlocution to make the chief understand that the stock was to cook for eight hours—a gentle five for the chicken bones, and then another three with the vegetables added.

THE WARAHALA were patient. They waited, and in that time Etienne sat down with the chief, with N'Tambi between them, and held a long, fascinating, practically one-sided conversation on the subject of cookery. Drawing upon his vast knowledge of the culinary art, Etienne that evening, in that place, authored the only really sophisticated recipe for roast human being in existence. He made the chief memorize and repeat each step, each ingredient—so that he would be sure to do it right.

The chief was grateful. He averred several times, through N'Tambi's somewhat shaky translation, that he considered Etienne his half brother. He remarked that only recently he had lost a half brother. He had eaten him.

Inevitably, time ran out. The stock was done. The roasting pits were of the perfect temperature. The chief rose, then, and he was smiling—but it was an indefinite sort of smile; there was nothing to show whether it sprang from brotherly love or gustatory anticipation. Once more N'Tambi's eyes became very wide, and he began to moan and tremble.

The chief gestured to Etienne. *"Yaki. Kekae."*

Etienne had heard this phrase often enough on the safari. Come. Eat. But he didn't know whether he was being invited to be *at* the table, or *an* it—

He rose. The other natives moved in a little more closely to the pits. The executioners who had taken the first porter behind the huts stood tense, their eyes on the chief, waiting for word of some sort.

The chief was still looking at Etienne and smiling.

Etienne threw his shoulders back. He lifted his plump chin high. He held his arms rigid at his sides, and he spread his legs a little to add a touch of magnificence and defiance to his stance. If the chief let him go he would—well, he would make his plans from there. But if he was to be the main course at the coming banquet, he had, at least, one satisfaction. He would be—as any creation of Etienne Alphonse Latrouse must be—a superb repast!

CANNONADE OFF SALEM

YOU will see relics of those days lovingly preserved in the Salem museum. Yellowing naval commissions. Letters of marque. A Liberty Tree flag, tattered, its colors long since faded away. A swivel gun, green with mold, fired how many times by the men who served it? And, above the old piece of ordnance, the print of a sailing vessel, the privateer *Amanda,* Captain John Quilt, master, sharpbuilt sloop of ninety tons, her sides painted blue, her stern square with four windows.

And not far away from the museum, in a churchyard, you will find a crumbling supplement to that picture on the wall, that

ILLUSTRATED BY
EVERETT RAYMOND KINSTLER

is, if you look carefully enough; a sunken stone, its almost undecipherable lettering draped by the branches of a willow, the leaves whispering to the bones below the ground . . .

"Mr. Quilt, sir, by your leave?"

"Waste of good powder, Mr. Tew."

First Officer Quilt stood at the rail of the ninety-ton sloop, his spy-glass trained on the blackened towers of a ruined mansion to the starboard of him. Some two miles north of Salem, built on a rise of ground, it had been the home of Edmund Harrington, loyalist and stamp distributor.

From the privateer's waist the men grinned upward as they noted the direction of Quilt's glass. Boatswain Eben Tew again shouted to him. "Let's knock that bloody eyesore down. We've a ball to spare."

"Save your ammunition, Mr. Tew. We'll need it to better purpose, I think."

The privateer sailed on, her prize twenty rods abaft of her, both vessels putting into

"Damn you—I'm master of this ship!" said Harrington. His eyes were ablaze with hate.

the South River where, on the wharves and banks, it seemed as if all the townsfolk were out to greet them. But the *Amanda's* flag was at half mast and the kerchiefs were not waved. They waited in silence.

A commanding figure of a man, Quilt, as he stood erect at the rail; six feet two in his top-boots, oilskin trousers stuffed into them, shoulders testing the seams of his pea-jacket, the breeze tossing his red hair as he looked down on the hushed people. His words were few.

"Cap'n Eli," he said. "Buried him at sea. Five of the crew killed and twenty wounded."

They took the news in stunned silence, hands pressed to eyes, a woman collapsing. Quilt berthed, made fast, eventually crossed the plank and walked toward the owner of the *Amanda,* who was waiting for him.

As a concession to the frugality of the times Nathaniel Leeds had given up his lace and fashionable wig, though not his madeira, as his florid complexion testified. He was dressed in homespun, his stout legs encased in cotton.

"So Cap'n Eli's gone," he wheezed heavily. "Damme, I'm grieved to hear that."

Quilt glanced back at the prize he had taken. "We engaged her off the Banks," he said. "Struck her colors after about two glasses of it. A hundred tons burden, loaded with cheeses and raisins, also silk and some plate."

The shipowner eyed the English schooner with approval. "Well done," he said. "We have news for you in return. Mad Anthony Wayne took Stony Point two weeks ago in a midnight charge. And I fancy another bit of news will surprise you. Philip Harrington has returned to us."

"Harrington!" Quilt's eyes widened. Everybody knew that Philip Harrington had commanded the British frigate *Hanover.*

"It appears we've been wrong about him," Leeds said. "It wasn't the son, it was the father who joined the King's navy—the peppery old fool. Philip told 'em he'd been heart and soul with us all along. They clapped him in prison for it. He's just now escaped; made his way back to us. You'll have the story from his own lips at supper this evening—if you'll honor us. I tell you, John, we had the bells of Salem ringing out yesterday and today. A Harrington on our side By God! That's victory in itself. That'll shake Georgie and his Parliament to their marrow bones." He moved to go aboard the prize which would add money to his coffers. "Six o'clock sharp by my daughter's orders," he called back.

BEFORE presenting himself that evening, Quilt changed into a blue coat and white breeches in which he walked down Derby Street to a square brick mansion set behind a walled garden, its box-bordered walks and lawn sloping to the river bank. A Negro servant admitted him, and he found Nathaniel Leeds sunk deep in an armchair, a bowl of punch beside him, talking to a man of dashing demeanor, attired in powdered queue, brown coat with gilt buttons, sprigged waistcoat, black velvet breeches.

"Johnny Quilt!" Harrington sprang forward with thrust-out hand. "My barefoot chum in many a boyhood adventure. It's damned good to see you again, John. I've thought about you many a time, wondering how matters fared with you."

The shipowner had struggled to his fat legs, ladled out more punch, was presenting a glass of it to Quilt who silently raised it in the direction of Harrington. As he drank he thought of the tottering ruin on which he had put his spy-glass a while ago. He thought of the night when Salem had set fire to the Georgian mansion, glad now that he had taken no hand in that violent retaliation.

"I reckon," he said in his rough speech, "we've repaid your loyalty with looting and the torch. We left nothing of your home except blackened walls. Not even a roof."

"The American sky is roof enough for me, John." Harrington was given to fine sentences which fell easily from his tongue. "Sixteen months, John," he dramatized, "in as foul a hulk as ever chained a man to its scummy and rat-infested boards."

Quilt could only stare. It seemed incredible that this elegantly dressed gentleman before him, smiling, glass in hand,

had just come from sixteen months in a prison ship.

"When I refused to take the oath to the Crown, they had me up for trial by a naval court. I was accused of rebellion, desertion, treason. I don't know to this day how I escaped the noose—" He stopped abruptly, hearing the swish of petticoats. Gallantly he went to the hall where he gave his hand to a young lady coming down the stairs.

Nathaniel Leeds' only daughter was fair to look upon in her lemon-colored dimity, her dark eyes sparkling. "Most thoughtful of you, Philip," she thanked him, a suggestion of raillery in her voice. "Those last two steps are devilish for me."

Her pretty face was solemn as she entered the library, giving Quilt her hand, studying him in silence for a moment. "I was sorry to hear about Captain Eli," she said.

He wanted to bow to her, but he lacked the manner of it. Cap'n Eli had been his best friend and he said, "A great loss to me, ma'am."

"A great loss for all of us. His wife collapsed when she heard the news. I've been with her all afternoon." Her hand touched his sleeve. "The whole town is singing your praises for the way you fought your ship. It will be yours now, and I congratulate you."

He smiled, wanting words, as he always did in her presence. Supper being announced, they were shortly seated in the dining-room, its table glittering with silver and crystal under the lighted candles, its mullioned windows overlooking the river.

"The filing of my leg irons was the damnedest job of all," Harrington was saying. "Weeks of killing work, a Negro had a small file. He escaped with me, but was caught again."

For Quilt's benefit he told how he had crossed Nova Scotia and sailed the Bay of Fundy in a stolen boat, barely reaching the mainland before being swamped. There he began the long and punishing journey through the woods to Boston where he lodged with friends who fed and clothed him, helping him to recover his strength before he made his way home to Salem.

To Quilt the story left much to be explained. He hungered for details of the adventure, though he didn't ask. It must have been such a brutal ordeal that Harrington hated to dwell on it.

During the telling of his story, Amanda Leeds had remained silent, the candlelight enhancing the loveliness of her dark eyes. "What of your mother and sister, Philip?" she now inquired. "You haven't told us about them."

"They sailed for England soon after we reached Halifax, father staying behind. He had other plans. A commission in the King's navy and," he added quietly, "revenge. In his eyes I was a rebel and a traitor. He broke with me entirely—willing that I should rot in prison."

Horrible as it was, they could all believe that. Edmund Harrington was a stiff-necked, proud and rabid royalist, while his son had been the reverse. Indeed without actually opposing his father, Philip had sympathized with the colonists and sided with them to an extent just bordering on disloyalty to his own family. In times of danger it was his duty to protect his mother and sister, and he had done so with the approval of all, save a few Salem ruffians.

At the conclusion of supper Philip begged Amanda to sing for them. She went to the adjoining music room, Quilt following, for he was never more under her spell than when she was seated at the harpsichord. Nathaniel Leeds, however, detained him.

"You don't care for these pretty accomplishments, John. Seadogs like you and I prefer the malmsey." He lifted a cut-glass decanter. "In my opinion this is the best pipe of it that ever came out of the Canaries."

Quilt had no such judgment of wine, yet he fancied the shipowner had special news for him that would make his dreams come true. Now that Cap'n Eli was gone, he might—as Amanda had hinted—be master of the privateer when she put to sea.

And as though reading his thoughts, Leeds toasted the sloop. "The *Amanda*," he said. "In the regular order of such matters you are now in command of her, John. You've earned it and won it, and Philip would like to serve under you until he secures a commission in the Continental Army."

He explained that Harrington had immediately offered his services in any capacity for their cause, and this was highly noble of him considering the ugly fact that they had utterly destroyed his home and a property which had taken his family a hundred years to accumulate.

"As you know," Leeds went on, "he attended a naval academy in England when he was a boy of fourteen, so he is versed in the high standards of seamanship." The shipowner coughed. "Now this is only a suggestion on my part. Because of the gallantry of his return, the suffering he has borne in our cause—" Again Nathaniel Leeds coughed as if in embarrassment. "I think we owe him a measure of our—well, let me use the word repentance."

Quilt nodded.

"So I thought, as a gesture of good-will, you might be willing to let him have the sloop until he joins General Washington in the field."

Not a muscle of Quilt's face so much as moved. In a level voice he said, "That's entirely up to you, sir."

"No, I leave the decision to you, John. He's willing to go with you as first officer. He says he doesn't care what it is so long as he can pay them back for those long days and nights in a prison ship."

Into the quiet of the room came Amanda's voice, and as Quilt listened to her sweet singing he knew that Harrington's return had lost him not only the command of the sloop but something even more precious, remote as his chances with her were or ever had been. He was no match for Harrington in point of education, manners, family distinction. The truth was he had no family at all, had never known his mother and father. As a waif he had grubbed around the Salem wharves, taking odd jobs to earn him food and a place to sleep. What kindness he received in those days had been due to the Harringtons alone.

The wine glass in his hand had the weight of lead as he raised it. "To you, sir," he said respectfully, "and to Cap'n Harrington."

"Meaning you're willing to serve under him for a voyage?"

"Right."

"By God!" Leeds shouted. "I must say that's handsome of you, John. I thought perhaps you'd see it in my light."

Amanda and Philip returned to the room. "I'm angry with you, John," she said, her eyes flashing. "Evidently you prefer your glass to my singing, but you don't have to drown me out with shouting."

He looked at her in dismay. "I'm sorry if I offended you, ma'am," he said.

Making up an excuse he shortly afterwards said goodnight to them, Harrington being lodged in the house. He walked back to his room, free from any bitterness of heart, remembering his and Philip Harrington's friendship in the days gone by. Although separated by wealth and birth, they had been linked together in many a boyhood adventure on and around the Salem wharves, Philip the older by a few years. His seniority took away some of the sting of Quilt's disappointment in the evening's result. . . .

BEFORE the privateer went out again, new hands were needed to replace her dead and wounded, and as the time went by Quilt met with unexpected difficulty not only in the taking on of new men, but also in signing up the old. They received no wages as they would aboard a regular merchant vessel or in the navy proper, for in the main privateering was a commercial venture, the men settling for a division of the profits after expenses were deducted.

There was no difficulty here, Leeds being fair and square in the distribution of prize money. The trouble was the men didn't want to serve under Harrington.

"What's he know about fighting a privateer?" Blanchard asked pugnaciously. "He's a Royal Navy man, or was at one time, and he'll expect us to bow and scrape to him."

Boatswain Eben Tew said, "How come he sided with us only after he reached Halifax? He was a King's man when he was here, same as his father."

"A man can pay allegiance to a different flag when the time comes," Quilt reminded them. "That's what we've done in the last few years."

"Then why did he leave here with his Tory family?"

"I don't know as we gave him such a hearty invitation to stay," Quilt grinned. "We burned and pillaged him out of his home. It was up to him, getting his mother and sister to safety. Nobody offered to man the sloop for them. He had to do it himself. I reckon if it hadn't been for him they wouldn't have reached Halifax alive."

It was August before he got a crew, Philip Harrington fuming over the delay for some unaccountable reason, and by this time Quilt was in partial accord with the men's grumbling. Harrington made too much of a figure in his tailored uniform. He hardly fitted the picture as a Son of Liberty.

And yet there was sheer audacity in his taking the privateer out, a daring which all of them recognized. In the event of their capture by an English ship of war the worst that could happen to the American survivors would be impressment or a prison ship. Harrington would be shot dead on the spot, if they didn't hang him to a yardarm.

Cutlasses, pikes and small arms had been placed aboard, the last of the stores; the *Amanda* was now ready to go out with the tide. Once more the wharf and river banks were crowded with townsfolk wishing their men Godspeed. At last the sloop awaited only her captain to step aboard, and now he and Nathaniel Leeds and Amanda came along the wharf. She ran over to Quilt as he was about to cross the gangplank.

"John! Are you going without a word to me?"

"I understood I had offended you, ma'am."

Her cheeks dimpled. "So that's why you have been avoiding me? My scolding of you. Well, it was deserved. I sang your favorite songs and you didn't even listen to me."

"I listened," he said.

Her expression sobered. "It was only later that I learned why father kept you in the dining-room. He wanted Philip to have the sloop for just one voyage. But you shouldn't have agreed to it, John. You should be in command of the ship. You have every right to be."

Startled by the tears in her eyes and voice, he said nothing.

"Come back safely to us," she said. "It —it means much to me."

The words ran riotously through his veins. He didn't know what to say to her in return. Insanely he wanted to take her in his arms, here in front of everyone, tell her that he worshipped her and had done so ever since she was about ten years old.

"I'll pray for you," she said.

He couldn't speak. His eyes alone thanked her and then he went across the gangplank, gave orders to cast off the ropes and to hoist sail. Last farewells were being called, crew and townsfolk giving out with cheers as the privateer *Amanda* slowly stood for sea in the face of a southwest wind. Three miles outside the Salem roads they hove to, Captain Harrington setting the watch and course.

Sailing into the wind well off the Massachusetts and Connecticut coastline, the voyage was uneventful until the fourth day, when two separate sails were sighted. Both looked to be prizes easy for the taking, but to the vast amazement of the men Harrington permitted the ships to go without any investigation beyond a look at them through his spy-glass. He said he didn't consider them worthwhile.

At his want of aggressiveness Head Carpenter Blanchard spat in disgust over the waist of the sloop. "It ain't Cap'n Ell's way of privateering," he growled. "And it ain't yours," he said to Quilt. "I don't know what he's up to. It's not for the good of us, mark my words. Pretending to search the horizon all day. What for, if he don't close with a ship?"

The following evening, moonlight silvering a fairly calm sea, Quilt was in his cabin as the call from the masthead came clearly.

"A sail to larboard!"

The ship, a brigantine by the looks of her, could be seen coming down under a full press of sail. An engagement couldn't be avoided and it was with a shout of approval that the men heard orders to prepare. Battle lanterns were hung between decks, the nine-pounders and swivels got ready. Seamen, naked to the waist in the warm August night, plied handspike and sponge-stave, their rammers ready to reload, while the powder boys scampered like monkeys.

Yet instead of joining the action, per-

haps not caring for his weather gauge, Harrington called for every spread of canvas, plainly a run-away maneuver and a jolt to the crew's morale, since they had taunted out challenges to the enemy across the moonlit waters. Under sailcloth the sloop now put to leeward, the brigantine keeping abreast at a slightly slower speed, unable to come within gun-range, the distance between them steadily widening.

WITH the breeze freshening it was thought that Harrington might be tacking into a position more favorable to give battle, though it didn't look that way to the older men, and Quilt was plainly at a loss to understand matters. Angered at running from the Britisher, her lanterns and red squares of her gunports now well astern, he took it upon himself to ask the captain's intentions. The answer staggered him.

"She's flying the red ensign, Mr. Quilt."

"I'm aware of that, sir. Let her have the advantage of a few guns, we can still whip her with this crew you've got aboard. She's an armed merchant—not the regular navy."

Harrington couldn't seem to meet his gaze. He was acting strangely. There was a peculiarly bitter look about his mouth—it wasn't fear—and he spoke with the disdain typical of his father. "We'll have a look at her in the morning, Mr. Quilt, and see what we're about. I hope that satisfies you."

By the way they were shaping, Quilt didn't think there would be any look at the brigantine again, yet at dawn the two ships were not more than a mile apart, and once more the Britisher came down under a press of canvas, her red ensign challenging, a flying Triton, painted flesh-color, in her head. If Harrington still wanted to run it would show him up now. He didn't run, and although his night's shaping had worsened his position, the men were all with him when he gave orders to join.

"We're out-gunned and probably outmanned," Quilt told his crew, "but that's been our situation since Lexington. We've licked 'em many times since then, and we'll do it again this morning."

Stirred by his words they broke into sustained cheering as they got the *Amanda* into readiness for battle under a leaden sky that threatened rain. Second officers, boatswains in charge of the carriage and swivel guns, all had their separate duties, their orders ringing sharp above the excited shouting.

"Get the powder charges up from the magazine."

"Aye, aye, sir."

"Fill the fire buckets and lay hose to the pump."

"Aye, aye, sir."

"Look lively now, every man jack of you."

The powder boys were tearing their throats with shrill cheering. "Hurrah for the *Amanda!* Hurrah for Liberty!"

To begin with, a running duel took place, the two vessels firing at about twenty rods. A ball from the brigantine's nine-pounders crashed through the privateer's lower deck, smashing a swivel gun and hurling it and three men into the sea.

As the two ships drifted closer, with possibilities to board, pikes and cutlasses were ready to hand.

From the waist Quilt looked up at the quarter-deck for the next move. Harrington's face was strained, his behavior wanting in resolve, and suddenly he called, "All hands to tack. Lay aloft. Haul and belay."

Stunned by the order, only a few of the men started to obey him. Most of them refused and went on firing their guns. An old sailor, a rammer in his fist, laughed derisively. "A dunghill rooster on the quarterdeck, mates!" he shouted.

Noting the privateer's intention to run, the enemy increased the fire, and now something happened that apalled Quilt so that he could hardly believe his own eyes. Harrington had flung a coil of rope from a belaying pin and was hauling down the American flag.

To prevent it Quilt sprang up there, his face livid. "What's the meaning of this, sir?"

"We're striking to them, Quilt."

"Not while I'm aboard."

"Damn you—I'm master of this ship." His eyes were ablaze with hate. "I swore to take this privateer out and surrender her—or see her go down with every man aboard—including myself if necessary—"

With the butt of his pistol Quilt knocked him senseless. This looked like overt mutiny, for in the thunder of battle the captain's words had not been heard. The men stood gaping as Quilt seized the line and sent the flag running up again. Securing it, he gave orders to the helmsman and roared to the crew below: "Keep serving your guns. We'll fight them to a finish."

They cheered him, put their backs into the battle, and taking charge, using his canvas audaciously, Quilt brought them into gun range again. Shouts, curses, cries of pain, mingled with the cannonade as the fight increased in fury except for lulls to permit the smoke to drift away. The *Amanda's* decks were being cluttered up with broken spars and tangled rope, interfering with the men serving the guns. On both vessels riggers were forced to race aloft to reeve new halliards and braces, while sailmakers desperately replaced torn canvas and carpenters dangled over the sides to plug shot holes with stoppers of oakum.

As chain and round shot poured into her the brigantine seemed to be having the worst of it. With a swishing sound her foremast came away, spars sagging—then falling—burying men under sailcloth. A ball fetched her flying Triton away and it hung face-downward in the smoke in a grotesque posture of defeat. Getting close under their larboard quarter, Quilt put a broadside into her as he sailed by in masterly seamanship, then swung the sloop over to bear under her stern. In this momentary cessation of battle he took a quick survey of his own condition, seeing smashed gun-carriages and splintered woodwork, men strewn over and under the timbers. And now he saw a flicker of fire in an open hatch.

"Look to the buckets and hose!" he shouted. "Keep that hatch fire away from the magazine at whatever cost."

Since victory appeared near, needing only the available men to secure it, few could be spared to fight this dread of explosion in the magazine. Grim determination made up for the depleted number of the men, some of them running to help with the brakes of the pump, others jumping into the hatch, beating out the blaze with sacking soaked in water, until the fire was under control.

AND now, all at once, the battle was over. For strangely enough, the magazine of the enemy blew up in a tremendous explosion, a great volume of smoke billowing outward and upward from her. Nor was this all, for as the two vessels drifted apart it could be seen that the brigantine was going down. With his men shouting themselves hoarse in victory, Quilt kept his glass on the doomed ship, disappointed at being robbed of her as a prize of war. She was sinking fast and some thirty rods from them she suddenly went down, nothing at all to be seen of her except floating spars and a bobbing jolly-boat with her few survivors.

The sloop's quarter-deck was a mess and lying motionless on it was Harrington, blood trickling from his temple. Cursing him for a white-livered coward Joshua Blanchard was about to put the boot into him—when he drew back.

"B'god, he's dead!"

Quilt bent down to examine him, stood up again. For a while he didn't speak, his lips tight in a face blackened by smoke, his red hair awry, blood running down his cheek from a wood splinter which had pierced through it.

"No," he told Blanchard, "he wasn't a coward."

The jolly-boat came alongside, English seamen at the oars. When their officer climbed aboard, announcing himself as Lieutenant Gardner, he reported nineteen wounded lying in the boat; the rest, captain, officers and crew had gone down with the brigantine, His Majesty's armed merchant, bound for Halifax.

"You fought well," he said to Quilt. "We thought we had you when you hauled your flag down."

"That was no act of mine."

Gardner looked puzzled. "You are not the master of this ship?"

"I am now." He looked over the rail. "Secure those men below," he ordered, "and attend to their wounded. Mr. Tew, place this officer in close quarters."

He went down to the waist, walked through the shambles of it. An uninjured thirteen-year-old lad stood there as if skewered to the deck, his face white, his mouth open, no sound coming from it oth-

er than his panting. Quilt gently ruffled his flaxen hair.

Making his way to the cockpit he gazed at the ship's wounded, the surgeon and his mates working over them, looking like butchers in their rolled-up sleeves and stained shirts. Fifteen dead and thirty-two wounded, not counting himself or Harrington in the total. Quilt felt the piece of wood embedded in his cheek, ignored it, went up on deck again.

Under his orders, after carpenters and sailmakers had repaired some of the damage, the privateer *Amanda* shaped for home. Before all those able to attend, Quilt read the burial service for the dead at sea, committing their bodies to the depths. After which he spoke briefly to the men.

"I reckon most of you saw what happened on the quarter-deck in the midst of battle. I struck down the captain of this ship and killed him. He took us out from Salem with the deliberate intention of surrendering us to the enemy. That's all I have to say now."

Late that afternoon as they slowly limped home, Quartermaster Pursley came up from below with a story he'd heard from one of the English prisoners. "Someone told him we had put out to sea under a Captain Harrington, and he said that about a year ago he served on board His Majesty's frigate *Hanover* under a lieutenant of that name."

"That would be Edmund Harrington perhaps."

"It couldn't have been," Pursley said. "I questioned him and he claims that Lieutenant Harrington was no more than twenty-six or so."

"Bring the man up here."

Still awaiting burial, Harrington's body lay on the berth in his cabin, Quilt not wanting to include him with his heroic dead committed to the sea in solemn service. Prayers would be read over him alone with little ceremony. So that when the prisoner was brought up on deck, he was led to the captain's cabin.

At the sight of the body, the prisoner's eyes rolled. "That's him! That's Mr. Harrington! Gawd!" he said in amazement, "How did he come to be captain of a Yankee privateer?"

"That's all," Quilt said.

As the carpenters continued to make repairs the sloop made better going of it each succeeding day, men at the masthead keeping a sharp lookout for enemy sails; and shortly before sunset, six days after their battle, they brought the steeple of Salem's church into view, announcing their arrival with a bow gun.

But instead of sailing directly into the river approaches, Quilt ordered the helmsman to continue north a few miles beyond the town, where he tacked and shaped south again. Presently they were running past the ruined towers of Harrington Hall at fairly close range.

Quilt called down to Eben Tew. "A few weeks ago you wanted to knock that eyesore down. Have you a ball to spare for it now?"

The boatswain and those around him grinned. "A load of grape might do a better job, sir."

"Very well, Mr. Tew. See that you don't miss."

The gun was carefully aimed, fired, and one of the blackened towers collapsed, a cloud of dust rising up against a crimson sky. For a moment the cloud seemed to take on the shape of the fine mansion that had once stood there under its English flag, then it spread and drifted away to nothingness.

The privateer sailed up the South River to the sound of Salem's bells, the townsfolk running to gather about the banks and wharves. Quilt could see the stocky Nathaniel Leeds amongst them, and beside him a girl in a lemon-colored dimity. She waved her hand to him, and there was a light in her eyes which even at that distance he could not misjudge. And something told him that whatever happiness lay in the days ahead, he and Amanda would share it together until—

CAP'N JOHN QUILT
b. 1755; d. 1781
Aged 26
Master of the Privateer Amanda killed at sea in gallant engagement with his Majesty's Frigate Hanover
and
AMANDA QUILT
his beloved wife
b. 1758; d. 1839
Aged 81

THE CAMP-FIRE

Where Readers, Writers and Adventurers Meet

IN THE year 1629 a ship was lost in a storm off the west coast of Australia—she was the *Batavia,* flagship of three Indiamen which had sailed out of Holland on October 28 of the year before, loaded with treasure for the Indies—chests of silver guilders and costly silks—and with colonists for the newly-discovered South Continent . . . In Vilhjalmur Stefansson's fascinating book, "Great Adventures and Explorations" he relates the facts as originally recorded in Pinkerton's collection of travels and voyages—facts such as "the reader would little expect, and perhaps will hardly credit"—for the mutiny, villainy and violence that followed the shipwreck of the *Batavia* comprise one of the grimmest and bloodiest chapters in maritime history.

Now, Jules Archer has brought the whole amazing story to life in his fictional version, "To Barbary or to Hell"—which leads off this issue of *Adventure*—and in our opinion it is one of those rare narratives that has every element of a truly great adventure story. In the notes below, Archer tells us how he came to do the yarn—

When I first stumbled across the true story of the shipwreck of the Dutch Indiaman, the *Batavia,* it struck me as wonderful material for adventure fiction. It had all the requirements—shipwreck, the desert island, intrigue, mutiny, riotous orgies, murder and massacre. There was only one flaw in it. It was too unbelievable.

I did extensive research to check up on the facts. The Australian Government had a full dossier on the case. Oddly enough, however, the Netherlands Government wrote me that it could find no record of Merchant-Captain Francis Pelsart in the extensive files of the Dutch East Indies Company.

There can be no doubt that the *Batavia* tragedy was authentic. It first came to light in the log and records of Captain Pelsart himself, printed in Amsterdam in 1647. It was later rehearsed in *Receuil de Voyages Curieux* by the French historian, Thevenot. And, although I have not seen them, there are authentic documents of the affair in the hands of the Hakluyt Society.

In "To Barbary Or To Hell," I have taken a number of liberties with the true story. The original happenings were much more complicated, and concerned a great many more people, than I have had the space to relate. The clashes between the forces on the islands were too numerous and repetitious to portray faithfully. And I have had to lend credibility to history's version of the battles.

If the historians are to be believed, about three dozen mutineers, armed with flintlocks and swords, made the attack on Corporal Webbye Hays' island. The island's defenders consisted of only six or seven soldiers, armed with a few swords, home-made cudgels and spears. Yet this pitiful handful, according to the records, lined the beach and drove off the attackers. Not once, but three times. That might be good enough for history, but not quite convincing to skeptical readers of adventure fiction.

Most of the characters in "To Barbary Or To Hell" are authentic. Pelsart was the Captain of the *Batavia*. Jerome Cornelis was Supercargo, and precisely the ambitious, ruthless scoundrel I have portrayed him. Webbye Hays was the marine corporal in charge, and apparently quite as brave and loyal as my story makes him appear. A mercenary named Thomas de Villier is recorded as one of the ship's French troops, but whether he was anything like my de Villier would be purely a matter of coincidence. Preacher Bastians and his daughter, Judith, were real ship's passengers.

Lucretia de Jonge's real-life counterpart was a woman named Lucretia van Milen, whose husband had been lost overboard soon after the *Batavia* struck the reef. According to the record, she at first resisted the Supercargo's importunities, and was taken forcibly. Afterwards she did become his willing mistress and partner in crime. She was not murdered but lived to stand trial aboard ship, where she apparently committed suicide. The sentence of Jerome Cornelis in the story is word-for-word with the actual judgment pronounced upon him by Captain Pelsart.

The orgies of the mutineers were even much wilder, and much more prolonged than I have suggested. They apparently stupefied his eminence, Captain-General Jerome Cornelis himself, since he ordered his two ship's carpenters murdered because he suspected their loyalty. Only after they were dead did it dawn on him that he had killed off the two men he was counting on to rebuild an escape vessel out of the wreckage of the *Batavia*.

Among those scenes in the story which must be set down as fictional are: the conflict between Webbye Hays and Thomas de Villier; the method by which Hays' men defeat the attacking mutineers; the fight scenes between Cornelis and Webbye Hays; the use of the sail to beat Wooter Loos' boat out to the approaching sister ship of the *Batavia*.

But almost all the other story developments—including the attempted bribe of de Villier, which turned into a trap for Cornelis, and the race of shallops to get to Captain Pelsart first—were pretty much as God had written them in 1629. If it is a wild and strange story, history must answer for it as well as I.

I should state here that history is not too certain as to which of the 42 islands making up what are now called the Wallaby, Easter and Pelsart groups, are the three islands on which the drama of the *Batavia* took place. The question is more than academic, because Captain Pelsart failed to retrieve one of the Company's treasure chests. Weighted down by an anchor and cannon, it lies today near the vanished wreck of the *Batavia*.

If you go after it and find it, remember who told you.

WE HAD an amusing note from John Keasler (author of "The Postwar Plan of Jason Korvene"), in which he confesses that he intends to use the first $2 out of his check from *Adventure* to buy a marriage license and enter upon the ancient and honorable state of matrimony. So—here's wishing him luck with "the postwar plan of John Keasler"—and let's hope the Little Woman will keep him busy at that typewriter turning out more yarns as cleverly plotted as the one on page 68. Mr. Keasler's letter follows—

Although I spent three years on the Pacific islands with the Army during the war, "Camp-Fire" readers may rest assured Jason Korvene had no real-life counterpart. But in my squadron a small, tanned Brooklynite used to take unmerciful kidding about looking like a Jap. And reading a newspaper story recently about the conditions today in the islands, then wondering where my slightly-built buddy was, combined to make the story. Apologies to Brooklyn, for all he ever took from anybody was shekels in stud games and I might add that in six years regular Army, with an open footlocker all the time, I never missed so much as a razor blade—nor did any man in my outfit.

As for me I am 28, and on the staff of the *Atlanta Journal*. Previously, for two years, I did a column on the *Tampa Morning Tribune* where I met an Irish gal working as a reporter on the *Tampa Daily Times*. Her name is still Dougherty, temporarily, but you may be interested to know your check is going to buy the license to make her legal name Keasler very shortly.

ROBERT F. GERMANN'S unusual novelette "The Three Left Legs" is his first for this magazine. But his byline is a familiar one elsewhere, having appeared in the *Saturday Evening Post*, *Good Housekeeping*, *Today's Woman*, *Encore*, *Tomorrow*, *Blue Book*, *Pic* and many other publications. Mr. Germann served in the recent shooting as a lieutenant in the Medical Administrative Corps in Italy and after V-E Day found himself headed for the Pacific, but on

V-J Day his ship was re-routed to the good old U.S.A. Mr. Germann, writing from his home in Florida (where he has just finished a play and is making final revisions on a novel) says that he misses a certain "leisurely quality of which we have so little in fiction today" and admits that, personally, he considers "The Three Left Legs" one of his best efforts to date. We liked it too.

IN THE October "Ask Adventure" Department, under the heading "Indian Fighting Wasn't Funny" we printed a query on early Army tactics and customs, in which was mentioned the historic battle of the Little Big Horn. Colonel R. G. Emery's answer to this query fortunately prompted a very interesting discourse from Frank Winch—

The reply to this inquiry by Col. R. G. Emery is one of the finest, most comprehensive and authoritative replies I have ever read. I like most impressively his treatment of the "Little Big Horn" angle. On this, Colonel Emery states that he is not an expert. That frankness is indeed refreshing.

Most of the items written about this fiasco are born and seen through the fine mesh screen of creative imagination. Sadly enough those who MIGHT have told the story, when found, were dead, stripped naked, where they had lain for about forty-eight hours.

By inborn inclination—perhaps due to the fact that I am a grandson of the famous John P. Walker who captained a covered-wagon train of immigrants from Indiana to Oregon in 1852—a member of his party was Ezra Meeker—the subject of the West, its pioneers, Indians and early tribulations have always been close to my heart. Meeker, by the way, left the caravan enroute and proceeded to California. I met Meeker at lunch in New York when he was 92, and his memory of the trip was fresh in mind.

To further my fetish in knowing men and things of the early days I cherish in memory the close friendships I enjoyed with many of the oldsters whose names grace history pages.

Among these—Wyatt Earp, Bat Masterson, Buffalo Bill, Pawnee Bill, Captain Luther North, Gil Robinson of Robinson Circus fame, a nephew by marriage of Wild Bill Hickok, General Nelson A. Miles, General Scott, U. S. Marshal Bill McCune, Iron Tail, one of Sitting Bull's entourage in the Custer affair, Ben American Horse, son of the great Indian of the same name. And a number of others, including that great personality General Charles King who wrote that intriguing factual record published in New York in 1890, by Harper Brothers. "Campaigning With Crook" and stories of Army life.

Buffalo Bill at one time was scout for the 5th U. S. Cavalry of which at the time of writing King was a 1st Lieutenant. It was while Buffalo Bill's Wild West was playing Washington, D. C., in 1910 King invited Cody to lunch at the Army and Navy Club in that city and took me along.

King had somewhere sometime met up with my pioneer grandfather Walker, and that seemed to break the ice for his grandson. We became fast friends from that day to the day, years later, of General King's death.

The General and Cody talked over Cody's hand-to-hand fight with Yellow Hand, a young Cheyenne aspiring to chieftainship. My luncheon got cold and forgotten as I listened.

Years later—1930 I believe—while on a transcontinental broadcasting and public appearance tour, I did a talk over KNX in Los Angeles on the subject of that duel between Yellow Hand and Cody. Some of the statements I made during that talk were promptly challenged by one of the many letters I received. That irked me—especially as during the past years I had met, lunched and chatted with General King many times in the East and of all things I wanted to be accurate in my statements. So—I wired King at his home in the East that I was sending him my script—asked him to read it—and tell me what the hell I had messed up.

King wrote me in labored long—that "he was doing for me what he had been asked by many other writers to do and refused them all." Then he went over my script word for word, made a few interlineations in pencil, one or two minor corrections, and returned the script. Both his letter and the script naturally I class as treasured collector's items. Though importuned by many I have never published his letter or the script itself. King's letter to me—the facts I use in the script, definitely settle for all time one of the TWO most controversial subjects in Cody's entire life. In fact the two episodes on which his reputation as a scout and plainsman were based.

I use the word "settle" advisedly; King was not only an eye witness, he was also the officer who ordered Cody to go in to meet Yellow Hand.

The other affair was his killing of Tall Bull, a noted chief. The "facts" of this hand-to-hand scrap, if it can be called that, are also disputed. The ONE remaining eye witness to that fight was at the time I knew him—Captain Luther North—who claimed that his brother the famous Major Frank North, white Chief of the Pawnees, actually fired the shot that killed Tall Bull. I carried on extensive correspondence with Luth North, instigated by our mutual friend Pawnee Bill. Luther goes into history of facts relating to Buffalo Bill and his times that have never been published. His

(Continued on page 126)

THE TRAIL AHEAD

Next month's issue brings you a great variety of yarns written *by* men, *about* men, and *for* men who enjoy stories of stirring action and authentic background. In short—"America's Most Exciting Fiction *for* Men!" Here's a look at the line-up—

MEDAL OF HONOR

A Dramatic Novelette of the Frontier Cavalry

By WILBUR S. PEACOCK

DESERT TRAP

A Story of the French Foreign Legion

By GEORGE C. APPELL

CAPTAIN McCARGO'S IRON MONEY

The Latest Adventure of the Fabulous Skipper of the Minong

By WILLIAM RATIGAN

DEAD MAN'S TRADE

A Tale of Intrigue and Ivory on Africa's Southeast Coast

By ALEXANDER WALLACE

Plus: Many other absorbing stories of adventure 'round-the-world, articles of lasting interest —and a full cargo of the usual unusual features and departments you find each month in—

ON SALE JANUARY 11th

ASK ADVENTURE

Information You Can't Get Elsewhere

FREE-LANCE photography.

Query:—I will sincerely appreciate any help on the following photographic questions.

1. Would you make a brief discussion of the requirements for releases on pictures offered for sale by a free-lancer? Where can these printed model releases be obtained?
2. In developing roll-film, can you stop the developing by washing, to examine the film, then resume developing, say, a portion of the film which might be underexposed? After developing but before fixing, is white light harmful?
3. Is a ferrotype plate necessary for glossy prints? Could you substitute a glass plate?

—Leslie H. Houpel
Grass Lake, Mich.

Reply by Paul L. Anderson:—

1. I do not know of any place where you could buy ready-printed model releases, nor would I advise you doing so. Your best plan would be to go to some alert, competent lawyer in your home town, and get him to draw up a model release, which you can then have printed, at small cost, at the local job printing office. The reason for this is that different states, and even different towns, have varying local laws and ordinances, so that what is legal in one place might not cover you in another. But the lawyer, if a good one, will know about these differences, and will be able to draw up a form which will give you full protection.

2. If, after developing your roll film, you will give it half a dozen or so changes, of say two minutes to each change, by white light with little danger of fogging. I have done this on a back porch in summer, exposing the film to full daylight though not to direct sunlight, with no bad results. However, if the film is exposed too long, it will print out in the undeveloped portions, exactly as will a printing-out paper. Of course you can't resume development.

Incidentally, I might mention that forcing development is distinctly *not* the ideal treatment for under-exposure.

3. Glass *can* be used for squeegeeing glossy prints, but is not altogether satisfactory, owing to the fact that nearly all glass has little pits or indentations on its surface, and these pits will cause dull spots to appear on your print. If you *must* use glass, the best plan is to give it four or five coats of some wax polish, such as ferrotype wax or Simoniz polish, polishing each coat as you put it on. This will fill up the pits, and give a smooth surface. It is, however, better to use ferrotype plates.

The squeegeeing of glossy prints is largely a matter of superstition; a chloride or chlorobromide paper of the glossy type will give prints which are perfectly good for reproduction, if dried simply in the air, and not squeegeed. Ferrotyping continues to be used chiefly if not entirely because photo-engravers, like almost everyone else, cling to their ancient formulae, and resent anything new, or different from what they are accustomed to. The more intelligent and skillful ones will make a good halftone block from a print on a rough mat paper.

ASSORTED shootin' irons.

Query:—How many different types of rifles, pistols, and revolvers are there manufactured in the world?

When was the first gun made and where?

Where can I obtain a list of the manufacturers of firearms and ammunition in the the United States and foreign countries?

Which would be the fastest shooting, a single-action or a double-action revolver?

—Ed Parnell
Wichita Falls, Texas

Reply by Donegan Wiggins:—I'll do my best for you. The first question is a stiff one; I have seen rifles of singleshot, repeating, and semi-automatic types, as well as two-barreled, three-barreled, and seven shot, as well as side-by-side and over-and-under barreled types. Most that you see are lever, trombone, belt or self-loading actions, however, with combination rifle-and-shot guns popular in Europe.

In my collection are revolvers of five, six, and seven shots, as well as pistols of two, four, and single barrels. There are so-called gas pistols, for shooting tear-gas, too. I own one, but use it merely to demonstrate its use.

As to where and when the first gun and ammunition was made, authorities do not agree, but we generally believe it was in China, over a thousand years ago. Cannon seem to have been used by the English in France, during the latter half of the fourteenth century, at Crecy.

I fancy the following firms can probably give as nearly a complete list of arms makers and cartridge makers, as can be had any where; Stoeger's, 507 Fifth Avenue, New York, N. Y. They are extensive importers of European arms and ammunition, as well as handling a complete line of American ones.

I understand that a modern military type double-action revolver has been fired five times in 2/5 seconds. The single-action is considerably slower, but I'd expect a good man could "fan" five shots out of a good old Colt Frontier Single Action in about a second and a half, or possibly less.

MAP reading.

Query:—I am contemplating a trip to some of our western states in the future and as I expect to get off the beaten path and to get out in the real wilderness, I am hoping you can help me with a couple of problems that confront me.

I have obtained maps of the spots to be visited from the Department of the Interior but am not sure I understand how to interpret them.

Can you tell of any books on this subject that will give me a working knowledge of map reading? I understand I will also need a map protractor. Can you tell of its use and the best kind to buy?

What kind of compass would you recommend?

—Edward Weigel
Chicago, Illinois

Reply by Paul M. Fink:—If I could only *talk* to you for about fifteen minutes I could teach you more about map reading than a dozen pages of print will ever do. It isn't hard, and after you master a few principles and practice a little you will be able to visualize the lay of the land easily from the map. If the ones you have secured are these topographic sheets made by the U. S. Geological Survey they have all the detailed information you will need.

For more information than I can put in a letter get a copy of the Boy Scout Handbook. It has a chapter or two on map reading, map making, use of the compass, etc., written by men who know their stuff. That book, also, has a lot of camping and woodcraft information.

A protractor is useful, but I've never considered it necessary nor have I ever carried one. If you get one, the kind you can buy at the dime store school supply counter will serve, unless you are going in for more complicated survey and map making. It's main purpose is to enable you to get an exact bearing on the map. For example, if your compass shows that a certain mountain peak is South 50 degrees East of you (assuming you know your exact location), by putting the center of the protractor on your location you can run a line in that precise direction and locate the peak at which you are looking.

For a compass I'd suggest that you get one of the floating dial type, as with these you never need to keep shifting it around to get the needle and the card to line up.

HITTING an "easy" 100 M.P.H. on the radio.

Query:—I would like to build a small racer that would hit 95 or 100 easily on the open road. I saw one over here (Germany, Landsberg up in Bavaria) that was just what I wanted. I believe it had a Jeep motor and frame, and body made out of airplane salvage. It would do 90 and that is about all I would ever use, but I want the maximum speed to hit 100. I would like it to be rather small. How much would such a "hotrod" cost, and what would be the upkeep? Could you advise me of concerns that handle this kind of material? I don't want strictly a racer, but something that will be able to take 60 per for hours on end, with 40 more if I need it.

—Bradie Ward
APO 61-A
c/o Pm. N. Y., N. Y.

(Continued on page 121)

ASK ADVENTURE EXPERTS

THE ASK ADVENTURE SERVICE is free, provided self-addressed envelope and FULL POSTAGE for reply are enclosed. Correspondents writing to or from foreign countries must enclose International Reply Coupons, which are exchangeable for stamps of any country in the International Postal Union. **Air Mail** is quicker for foreign service!

Send each question *direct* to the expert in charge of the section whose field covers it. He will reply by mail. **Do Not** send questions to the magazine, unless so indicated (c/o *Adventure*). Explain your case sufficiently to guide the expert you question. The magazine does not assume any responsibility. **No Reply** will be made to requests for partners, financial backing or employment.

★*(Enclose addressed envelope with International Reply Coupon.)*

SPORTS AND HOBBIES

American Folklore and Legend: *Songs, dances, regional customs; African survivals, religious sects; voodoo*—HAROLD PRIECE, c/o *Adventure.*

Archery—EARL B. POWELL, c/o *Adventure.*

Auto Racing—WALT WOESTMAN, 2310 Midlothian Drive, Altadena, Calif.

Baseball—FREDERICK LIEB, c/o *Adventure.*

Basketball—STANLEY CARHART, 99 Broad St., Mattawan, N. J.

Big Game Hunting in North America: *Guides and equipment*—A. H. CARHART, c/o *Adventure.*

Boxing—COL. JEAN V. GROMBACH, c/o *Adventure.*

Camping and Outdoor Cookery—PAUL M. FINK, Jonesboro, Tenn.

Canoeing—H. S. M. KEMP, 501 10th St., E., Prince Albert, Sask., Canada.

Coins and Medals—WILLIAM L. CLARK, American Numismatic Society, Broadway at 156th, N. Y. C.

Dogs—JACK DENTON SCOTT, R.F.D., Roxbury, Conn.

Fencing—COL. JEAN V. GROMBACH, c/o *Adventure.*

Fishing, Fresh water: *Fly and bait casting; bait casting outfits; fishing trips*—JOHN ALDEN KNIGHT, 929 W. 4th St., Williamsport, Penna.

Fishing, Salt water: *Bottom fishing, surf casting; trolling; equipment and locations*—C. BLACKBURN MILLER, c/o *Adventure.*

Fly and Bait Casting Tournaments—"CHIEF" STANWOOD, East Sullivan, Maine.

Hiking—DR. CLAUDE P. FORDYCE, c/o *Adventure.*

Horses and Horsemanship—JOHN RICHARD YOUNG, c/o *Adventure.*

Motor Boating—GERALD T. WHITE, Montville, N. J.

Motorcycling: *Regulations, mechanics, racing*—CHARLES M. DODGE, c/o *Adventure.*

Rifles, Pistols, Revolvers: *American and Foreign*—DONEGAN WIGGINS, 3325 Liberty Rd., Salem, Oregon.

Shotguns: *American and foreign; wing shooting and field trials; gunsmithing*—ROY S. TINNEY, Brielle, N. J.

Skiing—WILLIAM C. CLAPP, The Mountain Book Shop, North Conway, N. H.

Small Boating: *Skiffs, outboard, small launch, river and lake cruising*—RAYMOND S. SPEARS, 1117 Myrtle Ave., Inglewood, Calif.

Swimming—LOUIS DEB. HANDLEY, 115 West 11th St., N. Y., N. Y.

Track—JACKSON SCHOLZ, R. D. No. 2, Doylestown, Pa.

Woodcraft—PAUL M. FINK, Jonesboro, Tenn.

Wrestling—MURL E. THRUSH, New York Athletic Club, 59th St. and 7th Ave., N. Y., N. Y.

SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNICAL SUBJECTS

Anthropology: *American, north of the Panama Canal; customs, dress, architecture, pottery and decorative arts, weapons and implements, fetishism, social divisions*—ARTHUR WOODWARD, Los Angeles Museum, Exposition Park, Los Angeles, Calif.

Entomology: *Insects and spiders; venomous and disease-carrying insects*—DR. S. W. FROST, 465 E. Foster Ave., State College, Penna.

Forestry, North American: *The U.S. Forestry Service, our national forests, conservation and use*—A. H. CARHART, c/o *Adventure.*

Forestry, Tropical: *Tropical forests and products*—WM. R. BARBOUR, care of U. S. Forest Service, Glenn Bldg., Atlanta, Ga.

Herpetology: *Reptiles and amphibians*—CLIFFORD H. POPE, c/o *Adventure.*

Horology: *The science of time and timekeepers*—JOHN W. McGRATH, 434 W. 120th St., N. Y., N. Y.

Mining, Prospecting, and Precious Stones: *Anywhere in North America, Prospectors' outfitting; any mineral, metallic or non-metallic*—VICTOR SHAW, c/o *Adventure.*

Photography: *Outfitting, work in out-of-the way places; general information*—PAUL L. ANDERSON, 36 Washington St., East Orange, N. J.

Radio: *Telegraphy, telephony history; receiver construction, portable sets*—DONALD MCNICOL, c/o *Adventure.*

Railroads: *In the United States, Mexico and Canada*—R. T. NEWMAN, 701 N. Main St., Paris, Ill.

Sawmilling: HAPSBURG LIEBE, c/o *Adventure.*

Wildcrafting and Trapping—RAYMOND S. SPEARS, 1117 Myrtle Ave., Inglewood, Calif.

MILITARY, NAVAL AND POLICE

United States Army—COL. R. G. EMERY, U.S.A. Ret., c/o *Adventure.*

United States Coast Guard—LIEUT. C. B. LEMON, U.S.C.G., Ret., Box 221, Equinunk, Wayne Co., Penna.

United States Marine Corps—MAJ. ROBERT H. RANKIN, U.S.M.C.R., c/o *Adventure.*

United States Navy—FRANK HEROLD, 1647 Charon Rd., Jacksonville, Fla.

Merchant Marine—KERMIT W. SALYER, c/o *Adventure.*

Military Aviation—O. B. MYERS, c/o *Adventure.*

Federal Investigation Activities—*Secret Service, Immigration, Customs, Border Patrol, etc.*—FRANCIS H. BENT, c/o *Adventure.*

The French Foreign Legion—GEORGES SURDEZ, c/o *Adventure.*

Royal Canadian Mounted Police—H. S. M. KEMP, 501 10th St., E., Prince Albert, Sask., Canada.

State Police—FRANCIS H. BENT, c/o *Adventure.*

GEOGRAPHICAL SUBJECTS

★New Guinea—L. P. B. ARMIT, c/o *Adventure.*

★New Zealand, Cook Island, Samoa—TOM L. MILLS, 27 Bowen St., Feilding, New Zealand.

★Australia and Tasmania—ALAN FOLEY, 243 Elizabeth St., Sydney, Australia.

★South Sea Islands—WILLIAM MCCREADIE, No. 1 Flat "Scarborough," 83 Sidney Rd., Manley, N. S. W., Australia.

Hawaii, Christmas, Wake, Canton, Midway and Palmyra Islands—CARL J. KUNZ, 211-3 Naska, Kahului, Maui, T.H.

Africa, Part 1 ★*Libya, Morocco, Egypt, Tunis, Algeria, Anglo-Egyptian Sudan*—CAPT. H. W. EADES, 3808 West 26th Ave., Vancouver, B. C. **2** *Abyssinia, Italian Somaliland, British Somali Coast Protectorate, Eritrea, Uganda, Tanganyika, Kenya*—GORDON MACCREAGH, c/o *Adventure.* **3** *Tripoli, Sahara caravans*—CAPTAIN BEVERLY-GIDDINGS, c/o *Adventure.* **4** *Bechuanaland, Southern Africa, Angola, Belgian Congo, Egyptian Sudan and French West Africa*—MAJOR S. L. GLENISTER, c/o *Adventure.*

Madagascar—RALPH LINTON, Dept. of Anthropology, Columbia University, N. Y., N. Y.

Asia, Part 1 ★*Siam, Malay States, Straits Settlements, Java, Sumatra, Dutch East Indies, Ceylon*—V. B. WINDLE, Box 813, Rancho Santa Fe, Calif. **2** *Persia, Arabia*—CAPTAIN BEVERLY-GIDDINGS, c/o *Adventure.* **3** ★*Palestine*—CAPTAIN H. W. EADES, 3808 West 26th Ave., Vancouver, B. C. **4** ★*Afghanistan, Northern India, Kashmir, Khyber Pass*—ROLAND WILD, Savage Club, 1 Carlton House Terrace, London, S.W.1, England.

★The British Isles—THOMAS BOWEN PARTINGTON, Constitutional Club, Northumberland Ave., London, W. C. 2, England.

South America, Part 1 *Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, Bolivia and Chile*—EDGAR YOUNG, c/o *Adventure.* **2** *Brazil*—ARTHUR J. BURKS, c/o *Adventure.*

West Indies—JOHN B. LEFFINGWELL, c/o *Adventure.*

Baffinland and Greenland—VICTOR SHAW, c/o *Adventure.*

★Newfoundland—CAPT. LEO C. MURPHY, J.P., Great War Veterans' Office, St. John's, Newfoundland.

Mexico, Part 1 *Northern Border States*—J. W. WHITEAKER, 2903 San Gabriel St., Austin, Tex. **2** ★*West Coast beginning with State of Sinaloa; Central and Southern Mexico, including Tabasco and Chiapas*—WALLACE MONTGOMERY, Central Sanalona, S. A., Costa Rica, Sinaloa, Mexico.

Canada, Part 1 ★*Southeastern Quebec*—WILLIAM MACMILLAN, 89 Laurentide Ave., Quebec, Canada. **2** ★*Ottawa Valley and Southeastern Ontario*—HARRY M. MOORE, 579 Isabella, Pembroke, Ont., Canada. **3** ★*Georgia Bay and Southern Ontario; National Parks Camping*—A. D. L. ROBINSON, 103 Wembly Rd., Toronto, Ont., Canada. **4** ★*Northern Saskatchewan; Indian Life and language, hunting, trapping*—H. S. M. KEMP, 501 10th St., E., Prince Albert, Sask., Canada. **5** ★*Yukon, British Columbia, Northwest Territories, Alberta, Western Arctic*—PHILIP H. GODSELL, F.R.G.S., General Delivery, Airdrie, Alberta, Canada.

Alaska—FRANK RICHARDSON PIERCE, c/o *Adventure.*

Western U. S., Part 1—*Pacific Coast States*—FRANK WINCH, c/o *Adventure.* **2** *New Mexico; Indians, etc.*—H. F. ROBINSON, 1412 West Fruit, Albuquerque, New Mexico. **3** *Nevada, Montana and Northern Rockies*—FRED W. EGELSTON, P. O. Box 297, Elko, Nev. **4** *Idaho and environs*—R. T. NEWMAN, 701 N. Main St., Paris, Ill. **5** *Arizona, Utah*—C. C. ANDERSON, 616 N. 3rd St., Phoenix, Ariz. **6** *Texas, Oklahoma*—J. W. WHITEAKER, 2903 San Gabriel St., Austin, Tex.

Middle Western U. S.—*Lower Mississippi from St. Louis down, Louisiana Swamps, St. Francis, Arkansas Bottom*—RAYMOND S. SPEARS, 1117 Myrtle Ave., Inglewood, Calif.

Eastern U. S., Part 1 *Maine*—"CHIEF" STANWOOD, East Sullivan, Me. **2** *Vt., N. H., Conn., R. I., Mass.*—HOWARD R. VOIGHT, P. O. Box 716, Woodmont, Conn. **3** *Adirondacks, New York*—RAYMOND S. SPEARS, 1117 Myrtle Ave., Inglewood, Calif. **4** *Ala., Tenn., Miss., N. C., S. C., Fla., Ga.*—HAPSBURG LIEBE, c/o *Adventure.* **5** *The Great Smokies and Appalachian Mountains south of Virginia*—PAUL M. FINK, Jonesboro, Tenn.

(Continued from page 118)

Reply by Walt Woestman:—Building a road car which would hit 95 or 100 mph "easily" would probably cost more than most of us could afford. If you leave off the "easily" it would be a much more simple matter and at much less cost. Using a Jeep engine, which you mention, the main object would be to keep the weight down and even then I rather doubt that it would do 90, unless the engine had considerable work done on it. I am, of course, speaking of actual miles per hour and not speedometer miles.

Using a stock gear ratio of 4.11/1 and 28 inch tires (6.00x16) the engine would have to turn at 4500 rpm to reach a speed of 90 mph. While the Jeep engine will undoubtedly turn at this speed it would not do it "easily." By that I mean it would take considerable time to reach this peak.

My personal opinion is that the Studebaker engine does a much better job and probably stands up better than the Jeep, which by the way is an excellent piece of machinery when used as intended. From my own experience I know that a stock Studebaker coupe (Champion) will do an honest 80 mph—and no more. When equipped with a special head it will do 90 nicely but with the higher compression, the engine needs overhaul frequently. This car was run with a stock cam and probably would do 100 mph if equipped with a racing cam.

It is impossible to say how much a car would cost to build, due to the amount of work you would be able to do yourself; supply of materials, etc. Also the upkeep would depend entirely on the original construction of the car and the rate of speed at which it was driven. There are a number of firms manufacturing and selling equipment to "hop up" stock engines, but I know of none for Jeep engines. War surplus Cadillac engines may be bought brand new for around $500 and while such an engine will add to the weight of the car it should give you all the speed desired when placed in a light chassis. 25c mailed to *Speed Age Magazine* will bring you a sample copy and in it you will find numerous listings of racing parts. You might also ask them to send details on Item A-15 (mentioning my name) which is the new Kurtis Sports Car, which may be bought in knock-down form and assembled by the purchaser. A variety of engines is offered for this car from 82 to 160 HP.

MARSHALL, MacArthur, Eisenhower and Arnold.

Query:—We don't seem to be able to settle an argument about how many five star generals we have at the present time or how many were made in the last war. Will you kindly answer the following questions for us:

How many five star generals were made

GET INTO DIESEL-AUTO MECHANICS MASTER ALL PHASES

QUALIFY FOR JOBS LIKE THESE:

Diesel Fuel Injection
Automotive Motor Tune-Up
Diesel Engine Rebuilding
General Garage Mechanic
Agricultural Implements
Auto Engine Rebuilding
Auto Electrical Service
Public Utilities
Parts Dealers
Bus and Truck Lines
Industrial Maintenance
Contracting & Excavating
Business of Your Own
AND Many other similar openings

SHOP-METHOD HOME TRAINING
By an Established Resident School Prepares You for Many Good Jobs

Opportunity is everywhere for the trained Diesel-Auto Mechanic. Here's a fast-growing field that needs trained men who know installation, operation, maintenance and repair. Now—National Schools offers you a practical all-embracing Diesel-Auto Mechanic's Course in Diesels, High Speed and Heavy Duty; Semi-Diesels, Gasoline and Special Fuel Engines AND Allied Mechanics.

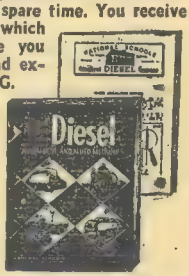
TOOLS AND EQUIPMENT

To make your training complete, we give you selected mechanic's tools and equipment, illustrated at left, including all-metal toolbox—as a regular part of your instruction.

EARN WHILE YOU LEARN

With our practical Master Shop-Method Home Training, you study at home in your spare time. You receive Spare Time Work Lessons, which show you how to earn while you Learn . . . for extra money and experience. You Learn by DOING.

New, illustrated book and sample lesson show how we train you . . . send for them today! No cost . . . no obligation!



APPROVED FOR VETERANS
Check Coupon Below

NATIONAL SCHOOLS
LOS ANGELES 37, CALIF. • EST. 1905

FIND OUT NOW... MAIL COUPON TODAY

National Schools, Dept. PFGD-1
4000 South Figueroa Street
Los Angeles 37, California

(Mail in envelope or paste on postcard)

Mail me FREE "Your Future in Diesel-Auto Mechanics" including a sample lesson of your course.

NAME ..... AGE.....
ADDRESS .....
CITY ..... ZONE.... STATE.....
☐ Check here if veteran of World War II

through the last war to the present? When were they made and who were they? Are their ranks permanent?

—W. C. Hartline
Sanford, Fla.

Reply by Col. R. G. Emery:—In looking at the tabulated answer to your question, below, please note the dates of rank in different columns; one, the AUS or temporary rank, and the other, the permanent rank conferred by the Act of Congress dated 23 Mar. '46.

	AUS	*Permanent*
Eisenhower (ac)	20 Dec. '44, auth. by Act of Dec. 14, '44.	23 Mar. '46
Marshall..	16 Dec. '44, by same act	"
MacArthur.	18 Dec. '44 "	"
Arnold.....	21 Dec. '44 "	"

Gen. Arnold has recently been re-designated General of the Air Force, rather than General of the Army, becoming their first. Also, please note the actual order of rank above, which is Marshall, MacArthur, Eisenhower, Arnold.

Hope this leaves you on the winning side.

THE SACRED mountain of Honshu.

Query:—I am seeking any information you can give me for the climbing of Mt. Fujiyama in Japan. Of course, there is nothing difficult in climbing Fujiyama, as many peasants climb it yearly; the catch is I intend to climb it in December or January.

My greatest lack of knowledge is what equipment would be necessary.

I would appreciate it greatly if you could put me in contact with anyone in Japan from whom I could get any information.

—J. L. Kaiwz
San Francisco, California

Reply by Dr. C. P. Fordyce:—Information on climbing Fujiyama is best obtained from the offices of General Douglas MacArthur, U.S. Army headquarters, Tokyo, whose personnel will direct you to the proper contacts for making the climb. As to equipment, this is the same as is used generally and is fully described in the "American Handbook on Mountaineering," in detail. This is published under the direction of the American Alpine Club.

You can get data on this mountain and also on mountain climbing methods and equipment from the Sierra Club in San Francisco whose offices are in the Mills Building.

HUNTING buried treasure by Twentieth Century methods.

Query:—Can you give me the name of the manufacturer, or the name of some supply house through which one of the mine detectors used by the Armed Forces could be purchased? I am anxious to buy such a machine. Also any instructions on how to use the machine would be appreciated.

Frankly a relative is reported to have buried some coin on our home place prior to his death, and we have never been able to locate same.

—T. H. Elmore
Florence, S. C.

Reply by Victor Shaw:—For the "mine detectors" you mention, there are no present manufacturers, for Uncle Sam had them made under war contracts; but they used the same principle that is employed in the Fisher instrument made at Palo Alto, Calif., and the Heddon made in Florida; but the housing of the instrument was different, and it was operated by a long pole to thrust ahead in locating mine fields.

Post-war, they've been sold by agents in charge of Army Surplus Depots— NOT the Army surplus stores! The price has been a flat $25.00 each, whereas the Fisher and Heddon instruments cost from $100 to $200 dependent on size. There should be a Surplus Depot in your state, I'd think.

All these "detectors" use the same principle, to register presence of metallic objects underground on a dial; and if your coin is in metal box it will be indicated without doubt if not much over ten feet deep from ground surface. If in a wooden box, it could be more difficult depending on the metallic composition of the coin: gold-silver copper, etc.

The Nazi mines were fairly near the surface, you know.

LONELY isles of the South Seas.

Query:—I am writing to you for information concerning the South Sea Islands. What I would like to know is this—would I need any kind of passport—a British passport for a British island, and a French passport for a French island? I would also like to visit some out-of-the-way places and was wondering if you knew of any. I will appreciate any additional information you can give me.

—Robert Lane Hunt
New York, N. Y.

Reply by William McCreadie:—The "South Sea Islands" is a vast territory, consisting of various races, so that it is a difficult task to reply to a vague inquiry. In any case, you should have a British or United States passport and I should advise also a French one. If you propose to visit such lonely places as the Marquesas or (further south) the Tuamotus, which are part of French Oceania (capital Papeete in Tahiti), you should have passport, medical certificate and mayoral or other certificates of character.

The Islands are very different in customs, compared with the old days. White visitors, except artists or writers, are not welcomed by the French. The two groups I mention are beautiful lands with plenty of fish, fruit and vegetables such as taro and some yams and cassava.

For transport consult French consul at San Francisco or New York, or Messageries Maritime at the former. Cheerio.

DEVIL'S Island—a hell of a place.

I was very much interested in Rene Belbennoit's book *"I Escaped From Devil's Island."* Recently I have heard that as a result of this book and of investigations by the authorities, that prison referred to as Devil's Island is being drastically changed. Is this true? What information can you give me about conditions at the prison and the treatment that the prisoners now receive?

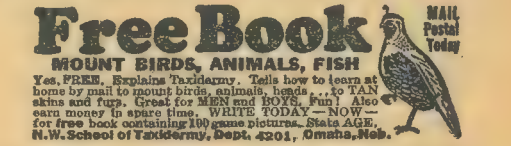
—Don Padget
Gulfport, Miss.

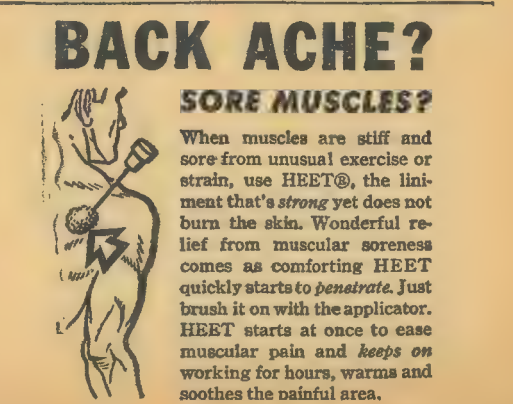
Reply by Edgar Young:—Years ago when I paused at Devil's Island it was a hell of a place, no kidding, and they had some very bad prisoners and crazy people there and an extremely tough administration gang who were just as bad as they were supposed to be.

Although I handle the West Coast countries for *Adventure* queries I keep track on all the other South American countries automatically, and I am convinced that conditions are really drastically changed from what they once were, and under the circumstances are about as good as they can be made, all things considered. Besides reading reports regarding the new regime and talking with airmen who were stationed in that vicinity during the war, I have talked to a fellow who got off his course with a sloop enroute from the Amazon to Miami and landed on the prison island by chance and was well treated, and also to a West Indian Negro who knew the islands well.

It is quite easy to get bales of information about any of the *republics* in Latin America, but information about colonies of European countries is not so easy to come by, and we have to depend on snatches here and there in travel books and library reference books. I guess Rene Belbennoit embellished his facts a bit, which is allowable under the circumstances; but one time I talked with five who escaped into French Guiana and crossed the mountains and then got to the Amazon by raft and upcountry into Peru where they went to work at a mine where I was located. They told some frightful stories and showed scars from beatings they had received. As a matter of fact, the entire tropics were bad at the time, including what is now the Canal Zone. When I first saw Colon it was built on

FACTORY-TO-YOU
MIDWEST TELEVISION
NEW GIANT 16 PICTURE TUBE
Immense 151 square-inch screen on new 16" metal-glass tube . . . clear, steady, bright pictures . . . Synchronized sound and picture that a child can tune in perfectly . . . Long Distance FM Circuit . . . Big 12" Electro-Dynamic Panasonic Speaker . . . Available in beautiful consoles or in complete chassis (not a kit). Buy direct at Low Factory Prices, with Low Down Payment and Long Easy Terms . . . and on 30 Days Trial! Send for 32-page, 4 color catalog today.
30 DAYS TRIAL
EASY TERMS
A Complete Line of Beautiful Consoles or Complete Chassis
Also a Complete new 1950 Line of
MIDWEST RADIOS
with new long distance FM Circuit and new 3-Speed Phonograph
Send for FREE 32 Page 4 color CATALOG
MIDWEST RADIO & TELEVISION CORP.
Dept. X221, 909 Broadway, Cincinnati 2, Ohio
NAME
ADDRESS
CITY ZONE STATE


Free Book
MOUNT BIRDS, ANIMALS, FISH
Yes, FREE. Explains Taxidermy. Tells how to learn at home by mail to mount birds, animals, heads . . . to TAN skins and furs. Great for MEN and BOYS. Fun! Also earn money in spare time. WRITE TODAY — NOW — for free book containing 100 game pictures. State AGE. N.W. School of Taxidermy, Dept. 4201, Omaha, Neb.
MAIL Postal Today


BACK ACHE?
SORE MUSCLES?
When muscles are stiff and sore from unusual exercise or strain, use HEET®, the liniment that's *strong* yet does not burn the skin. Wonderful relief from muscular soreness comes as comforting HEET quickly starts to *penetrate*. Just brush it on with the applicator. HEET starts at once to ease muscular pain and *keeps on* working for hours, warms and soothes the painful area.

EARN BIG MONEY
Learn a Trade!

Boost your income and make your future secure by mastering a good trade. Train at home in spare time, or in our Chicago resident school. *You learn in a matter of months.* Thousands have! Select your field, *then write C. T. I. today for valuable free information.* Act now!

C. T. I. TRAINS MEN FOR SUCCESS IN
- AUTO MECHANICS
- BODY, FENDER REPAIR
- DIESEL MECHANICS
- ELECTRICITY—ELECTRONICS
- RADIO—TELEVISION
- REFRIGERATION AND AIR CONDITIONING
- DRAFTING
- HOME STUDY

WRITE FOR FREE BOOKLET
COMMERCIAL TRADES INSTITUTE
1400 Greenleaf Dept. E67-1 Chicago 26

"How to Make Money with Simple Cartoons"

A book everyone who likes to draw should have. It is free; no obligation. Simply address FREE BOOK

ARTOONISTS' EXCHANGE
Dept. 481 Pleasant Hill, Ohio

LAW...

STUDY AT HOME Legally trained men win higher positions and bigger success in business and public life. Greater opportunities now than ever before. **More Ability: More Prestige: More Money** We guide you step by step. You can train at home during spare time. Degree of LL.B. We furnish all text material, including 14-volume Law Library. Low cost, easy terms. Get our valuable 48-page "Law Training for Leadership" and "Evidence" books FREE. Send NOW.
LASALLE EXTENSION UNIVERSITY, 417 South Dearborn Street
A Correspondence Institution, Dept. 1334-L, Chicago 5, Ill.

OWN a Business

Clean and Mothproof rugs and upholstery "in the home or office building". Patented equipment. No shop needed. Duraclean Dealer's gross profits up to $15 and $20 a day on EACH service man. These Nationally Advertised services create repeat customers the year 'round. Easy to learn. Quickly established. Easy terms. Send today for FREE Booklet—explaining full details. No obligation.
Duraclean Co., O-671 Duraclean Bldg., Deerfield, Ill.

INVENTORS

Patent laws encourage the development of inventions. Our firm is registered to practice before the U. S. Patent Office. Write for further particulars as to patent protection and procedure and "Invention Record" form at once. No obligation.

McMORROW, BERMAN & DAVIDSON
Registered Patent Attorneys
950-B Victor Building Washington 1, D. C.

MASTER MIND!
Learn Short-Cut Mathematics

Juggle figures, do baffling number tricks. Make people gasp at your marvelous *lightning-quick* mind. Multiply 4 figures by 4 figures without using old-fashioned multiplication! Big cloth-bound volume; fully illustrated course. Includes worked-out problems, answers, etc. Sensational bargain, only $1.49, postpaid — or COD plus postage. Satisfaction guaranteed or refund. Order this amazing "Short-Cut Mathematics" today!
NELSON-HALL CO., 1139 S. Wabash Ave. Dept. A-5 Chicago 5, Ill. **$1.49** Complete

stilts over stagnant water and alligators and other reptiles acted as garbage disposal plants for what was tossed into the water from the rickety houses. Guayaquil, Ecuador, was worse, for Yellow Jack and bubonic were endemic and one revolution followed another. Now, Colon is quite healthy and Guayaquil fairly so, due to modern sanitary methods and ways to combat insect carriers of disease.

I guess you could get the names of local administrators at Devil's Island from the Colonial Secretary of the French Government in Paris.

HIKER *vs.* horseman.

Query:—I would like to know if it is true that a man can walk across the United States faster than a horse ridden by a man.

I have been told that it has been tried before. If this is true, I would like to know when and how far; also how long it took?

—Les Parnell
Tumacori, New Mexico

Reply by Dr. C. P. Fordyce:—I know of no contest between a man and a horse walking across the U.S. The best guide is to compare a man's speed with that of a horse and to cite the outstanding walk of all time—that of Edward Payson Weston who at the age of 72 walked from Santa Monica, Calif. to New York City aiming to do this in 90 days but he finished 17 days ahead of his schedule. We must assume that a man tackling such a walk is in perfect condition after doing very much walking on shorter trips and that he be properly equipped, especially as to footgear. He carried nothing and walked the highways.

The man in the wilds will be slowed up because of uneven walking terrain and obstructions such as trees and shrubs.

Any man who goes on a hunting trip will walk beside his horse to rest his legs, especially when he is not accustomed to a saddle, as is the case with the average business man, and he can walk as fast as the horse.

I much prefer to have a small knapsack carrying such essentials as amber goggles in case, cold cream, rain cape, extra socks, adhesive plaster, laxative, fly dope in season, kerchiefs, sweater, towel, soap, small cloth bag for lunch.

HINTS ON WALKING

Get your shoes with a wide last like the Army Munson last. The shoes called oil drillers about 8 inches high are fine but I prefer the 6-inch top and ONE SIZE LARGER THAN STREET SHOES to allow for swelling and for the use of heavy wool socks. Lightweight cotton or silk can be worn next the skin.

Before a long hard hike be sure you are in perfect condition, with shoes well broken in. You can toughen the feet by soaking in salt water. Start with a pace of 3 miles

an hour or shorter and rest a few minutes each hour. Don't overdo. Bathe daily even if only a rub down with a wet towel. Watch the bowels. The best places to camp and hike are in the national and state playgrounds. If you build campfires be sure you pour water over them to extinguish all fire when you leave.

TARGET shooting and tin-can plinking.

Query:—I have a .22 rifle which I use for cellar target shooting and occasional tin-can plinking on Sundays. I have been using .22 long rifle shells in this weapon merely because everyone else I know does so. However, what with the rising cost of cartridges I have been thinking of trying .22 shorts or longs for this minor shooting. My friends all warn me against this practice though, claiming it will "ruin" the rifle. When I try to pin them down to something more definite I don't get any satisfaction. While the firearm isn't expensive I'm interested in keeping it in the best possible condition, so I thought I'd check with you before using any of the shorter shells. Can you give me any data whether pro or con in connection with this problem?

—Willard J. Gallagher
Buffalo, New York

Reply by Donegan Wiggins:—I think I can assure you that you can use the .22 short cartridges of modern type, the non-rusting sort, with no damage to the rifle bore.

You see, the old type priming was what did the dirty work in the other days; the fouling accumulated at the spot in the chamber reached by the front of the cartridge case; ultimately the accumulation of burnt powder and priming compound ate away the steel, by a rust-like process, and the bullet of the .22 short passed from shell mouth to barrel rifling in a rather erratic manner; a sort of jump, in fact, which didn't make for accuracy, you may guess.

Also, the fired case of a .22 long or .22 long rifle cartridge was swelled by the pressure developed by firing, and swedging into this minute depression, generally caused a lot of trouble in extraction of the empty case. Sometimes a cleaning rod was needed to free the fired case of the longer cartridges from a chamber so eroded by the use of the .22 shorts.

But today, with cartridges such as Kleanbore, Staynless, Rustless, etc., this bad effect to the bore of the chamber seems to be done away with. I had to have a repeater of my own rechambered some years since, from the effects of firing .22 shorts, but have fired the modern ones for years past with no trouble whatever. Just clean the chamber of the rifle with a good brass wiping brush after using, is all I ever do, and my rifle has seen far more use than that of the average shooter will ever do, I fancy.

THE END

AUTO BOOKS ON APPROVAL

SEND NO MONEY. Just mail the coupon for a complete set of 4 Big, Thick Auto Books, 20th Edition. Over 2700 Pages! Whether you are a mechanic or helper, expert or apprentice, auto owner or driver, take immediate advantage of this FREE EXAMINATION OFFER.

MAKE GOOD MONEY NOW
HOLD A PERMANENT JOB

America wants its automobiles kept in good repair. Men with "know how" are in demand, at big pay. These books will help you get and hold an important job, or give you a chance to go into business for yourself now or later. Any man who half tries to improve himself can learn auto servicing and repairing by this quick reference method. Use the JIFFY INDEX to find easily understood answer to any auto problem. These wonder books prepared by eleven of America's great automobile engineers. Many hundreds of valuable illustrations. Send the coupon TODAY.

CAN YOU FIX IT?
These wonder books tell step by step HOW to make difficult repairs and adjustments, how to keep a car at maximum efficiency, including latest improvements in car design and operation. Engine troubles and how to correct them well covered.

4 BIG, THICK VOLUMES
Over 2700 pages, 2000 illustrations, wiring diagrams, etc. Beautiful modernistic, washable cloth binding.

A year's consulting privileges with our engineers now given with these books without extra charge.

Publishers Since 1898

AMERICAN TECHNICAL SOCIETY, Dept. A131
Drexel Ave. at 58th St., Chicago 37, Ill.
I would like to examine your 4-Volume Set of Auto Books. I will pay the delivery charges only, but if I choose I may return them express collect. If after 10 days' use I prefer to keep them, I will send you $2 and pay the balance at the rate of only $3 a month until $24.80 has been paid. Please include consulting service as offered above.
Name .....
Address .....
City ..... State .....
Please attach letter stating age, occupation, employer's name and address, and name and address of at least one business man as reference. Men in service, also please give home address.

FOR THE BEST IN FICTION
LOOK FOR THIS SEAL →

SAVE MONEY *with this*
POWER TOOL KIT OF 1001 USES!

IN NEW PLASTIC BOX

Have more fun with your hobbies — save money on home repairs. This famous super-speed Casco power tool comes complete with accessories that drill, grind, sand, sharpen, saw, etch, route and shape metal, wood, plastic, leather, glass. Precision built and fully guaranteed.

ORDER NOW!
Send check or M. O. (no C.O.D.'s). Prompt delivery pre-paid parcel post.
J. H. J. INC. Office 333
139 S. Beverly Drive • Beverly Hills, Cal.

DO ALL THIS . . .
Make models, gifts, toys & home decorations • Polish all metals, jewelry & silverware • Clean electrical & mechanical parts • Hundreds more uses.

WAR SURPLUS VALUES!

Zipper Field Jacket—Water repellent wool lined, action back, sizes 32-42 $2.45
Army Wool Pants (28-38 waist).... 2.95
Army Wool Shirts (sizes 13½ to 16). 2.25
Army Jacket (34-42) H.B.T..... 1.29
Army Pants (28-36) H.B.T..... 1.39
Army Wool Blankets..... 3.95
Army Raincoats (Rub.) 36-46..... 1.95
Army Combat Boots, sizes 6-11..... 3.95
Satisfaction Guaranteed or Money Back
Send $1 deposit, balance COD plus postage.
GUILD Dept. 268, 120 E. Broadway NEW YORK 2, N. Y.

Send for FREE Catalog for Family

ACCOUNTANT
BECOME AN EXPERT

Executive Accountants and C. P. A's earn $3,000 to $10,000 a year. Thousands of firms need them. We train you thoroly at home in spare time for C. P. A's examinations or executive accounting positions. Previous experience unnecessary. Personal training under supervision of staff of C. P. A's. Placement counsel and help. Write for free book, "Accountancy, the Profession That Pays."
LASALLE Extension University, 417 So. Dearborn St.
A Correspondence Institution Dept. 1334-H, Chicago 5, Ill.

NOW to BREAK and TRAIN HORSES
SEND FOR THIS FREE!

Make money. Know how to break and train horses. *Write today for this book FREE*, together with special offer of a course in Animal Breeding. If you are interested in Gaiting and Riding the saddle horse, check here ( ) *Do it today—now.*
BEERY SCHOOL OF HORSEMANSHIP
Dept. 841 Pleasant Hill, Ohio

INVENTORS

Learn how to protect your invention. Specially prepared "Patent Guide" containing detailed information concerning patent protection and procedure with "Record of Invention" form will be forwarded to you upon request—without obligation.
CLARENCE A. O'BRIEN & HARVEY JACOBSON
Registered Patent Attorneys
026-A District National Bldg. Washington 5, D. C.

SUIT YOURS AS A BONUS

And Big Money in Spare Time, Too
We want you to wear this fine made-to-measure suit! Make it yours by sending a few orders, and earn BIG CASH PROFITS in spare time. Your suit will help you get more orders with over 100 rich, quality fabrics, tailored-to-measure to newest styles. Also Ladies' Tailored Suits—complete line. Write today for FREE SAMPLES. No experience, no money needed. For quick action tell us about yourself.
J. C. FIELD & SON, Inc.
Harrison and Throop Sts., Dept. A-1698, Chicago 7, Ill.

ILLUSTRATED BOOKLETS
The Kind You Like!

You'll be a tremendous hit at your next party with these handy pocket size booklets, crammed with EXCITING CARTOONS, GLAMOUR GIRL PHOTOS, SIZZLING JOKES, etc.
5 BOOKS Hundreds of Pages Each Book Different
Only $1 Postpaid
Sorry, No C.O.D.'s
DUMONT SALES • 210-A8 Fifth Ave., New York, N. Y.

TOOTHACHE?
"Since 1888"
Quick relief with Dent's. Use Dent's Tooth Gum or Dent's Tooth Drops for cavity toothaches. Use Dent's Dental Poultice for pain or soreness in gums or teeth. At all drug stores.
DENT'S TOOTH GUM TOOTH DROPS DENTAL POULTICE

(Continued from page 115)

letters also form a part of my treasure—a virgin gold series of collector's items.

I have read and have in my collection all the books mentioned by Col. Emery—of these I believe that "The story of the Little Big Horn'" by Graham is the most attentive to aftermath study of the affair.

Col. Emery recommends on the "general subject" any or all the works of Charles King.

It is my impression that one will not gather any information about the battle itself—Big Horn, I mean. The fight took place on June 25, 1876.

On June 4th of that year King was 1st Lieutenant of Co. K, U. S. 5th Cavalry and the outfit had its regimental headquarters far to the south, midway between Leavenworth and Denver on the winding banks of the Smoky River. General Carr was in command of the 5th.

It was on June 22, 1876, that the 5th was ordered to proceed north to "find the crossing of the broad Indian trail from the Red Cloud and Spotted Tail reservations by which hundreds of Indians were known to be going to the support of Sitting Bull and Crazy Horse." This was to reinforce General Crook who was on the chase after the Indians.

King and his outfit didn't meet up with Crook until *Friday, August 4th.*

Colonel Emery is RIGHT when he states "I know they did not have so-called liaison. I think that Crook and Gibbon did try to keep in touch."

Shortly prior to June 25 the armies of Terry and Crook (including Gibbon's and King's outfit) "were not more than one hundred and twenty-five miles apart, yet communication between them was impossible."

Again to quote King's "Campaigning With Crook."—page 54: "Crook had sallied forth and fought them (the Indians) and found them altogether too strong and dexterous, so he retired to Goose Creek once more; and here he lay on the 25th of June, when Custer was making his attack and meeting his fate—*only fifty miles away and not a soul of our command had the faintest idea of what was going on.*" (The italics are mine.)

It seems to me that any story pivoting on the fact that Crook, Terry and Gibbon—OR ANY INDIAN FIGHTER—did not send out couriers, or scouts, borders on the fantastic and by the weight of its own fallacy would be doomed to failure. If not ridicule!

The pages of Indian warfare history are plastered with names of scouts to live forever in their daring attempts—many of which naturally failed. Take King's word for instance (same book) page 55: "Lt. Sibley, of the Second Cavalry, a young officer of great ability, and universally conceded to be as full of cool courage as any man could well be, had made a daring attempt to slip through with thirty picked

men; but the Indians detected him quick as a flash and after a desperate fight he managed to get back to the command with most of his men but with the loss of all his horses.

"General Crook—from the reports of his scouts—had every reason to believe that he would find the mass of Indians posted in strong force among the bluffs and uplands of the Rosebud, two days' march away to the north. He had been unable to hear from General Terry or to communicate with him."

It is my opinion that there are some who will take issue with Colonel Emery's statement, "in many ways, Indian warfare was the grimmest in which ground fighters have ever engaged . . . it was a no-limit proposition."

I do not question however that old-timers who were scalped and horribly mutilated—could they talk today—to a man would be in full accord with Col. Emery's theory. I know, rather *knew*, MANY valiants who could render pertinent personal testimony on the subject. Some of these I have mentioned earlier in this dissertation.

And when we sent Mr. Winch's letter along to Colonel Emery, the colonel came back as follows—

I was pleased and inflated no little by Mr. Winch's letter. When the six-year-old Indian I'm raising—or trying to—reaches the cowboy-and-Indian stage, I'll have that to impress him with.

I think, frankly, that Mr. Winch has given me more credit than I deserve. However, being in such a complimentary mood, he should also have cited the fact that I did *not* mention Chief Joseph and his Nez Perce in support of my contention that the redskins were rugged characters—that hackneyed old canard about the only war the U. S. has ever lost.

My respect for the noble redman probably dates back to my cadet days. One afternoon during boxing season, Billy Cavanaugh brought a stocky, copper-colored gentleman to the gym and introduced him around. The gentleman was looking for a little workout. I didn't know it, but I must have been enjoying Billy's disfavor at the time because he chose me. Three rounds and multiple contusions later, I knew a good deal more about Indians and short left hooks. The visitor was the legendary Long Lance, hereditary chief of the Bloods—I think it was. But the ex-middleweight champion of the Canadian AEF. That I *know* he was!

I put in some time in the 24th Infantry, years ago. The regiment had had extended border service and had kept a meticulous journal. One passage I have never forgotten. I can quote it verbatim: "The hostiles have now taken to ambushing our firewood details. It is their custom to lie quiet-

GET INTO THE BIG MONEY AS A TELEVISION AND RADIO SERVICE MAN!

F. L. SPRAYBERRY President SPRAYBERRY ACADEMY of RADIO

LEARN AT HOME IN SPARE HOURS — EARN EXTRA MONEY WHILE TRAINING

Prepare for a fine job or a business of your own in Radio and Television. Big opportunity for trained men. Find out how I train you by sending you 8 big kits of real, professional Radio parts—how I train you to build a powerful 6-tube superhet radio, a 16-range test meter and perform over 175 interesting, instructive Radio experiments. My training is **practical**—sticks with you, helps make money for you. You don't need previous schooling or experience. YOU LEARN BY DOING—follow simple, easy lessons that teach you RADIO and TELEVISION from the ground up.

GET SAMPLE LESSON *FREE*

ACT TODAY! Fill out and rush the coupon to me —I'll send you my FREE BOOK, "How To Make Money in Radio, Electronics and Television" and also valuable Sample Lesson, "How To Read Radio Diagrams and Symbols." I'll also tell how you can Earn While You Learn. *Veterans:* Approved for G. I. Training under Public Laws 16 and 346.

Sprayberry Academy of Radio, Dept. 52-E
111 N. Canal Street, Chicago 6, Ill.
Rush FREE BOOK & Sample Lesson.

NAME _____ AGE _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____ STATE _____

WATCH FOR THIS SEAL OF QUALITY!

BECAUSE —

We purchase 4,000 stories a year, over 20,000,000 words of top-flight reading pleasure, all bearing this guaranteed hallmark of unexcelled fiction entertainment—

Watch for this Popular Fiction Group seal on every magazine you buy. It is your one sure guide to good reading always!

A POPULAR PUBLICATION

"Saved my Life
A God-send for GAS-HEARTBURN"
When excess stomach acid causes painful, suffocating gas, sour stomach and heartburn, doctors usually prescribe the fastest-acting medicines known for symptomatic relief—medicines like those in Bell-ans Tablets. No laxative. Bell-ans bring comfort in a jiffy or return bottle to us for double money back. ©
BELL-ANS for Acid Indigestion 25c

High School Course at Home
Many Finish in 2 Years
Go as rapidly as your time and abilities permit. Course equivalent to resident school work — prepares for college entrance exams. Standard H. S. texts supplied. Diploma. Credit for H. S. subjects already completed. Single subjects if desired. High school education is very important for advancement in business and industry and socially. Don't be handicapped all your life. Be a High School graduate. Start your training now. Free Bulletin on request. No obligation.
American School, Dept. H149, Drexel at 56th, Chicago 37

NAUSEA due to motion upsetting the organs of balance, relieved with MOTHERSILL'S SEASICK REMEDY
For Land and Sea travel. Satisfactory results or money refunded.
THE WORLD OVER 24 DRUGGISTS

LAW
STUDY AT HOME for Business Success and LARGER PERSONAL EARNINGS. 40 years expert instruction—over 114,000 students enrolled. LL.B. Degree awarded. All text material furnished. Easy payment plan. Send for FREE BOOK—"Law and Executive Guidance"—NOW! [G. I. Approved.]
AMERICAN EXTENSION SCHOOL OF LAW
Dept. 22-B, 646 N. Michigan Ave., Chicago 11, Illinois

STOPS FOGGY WINDSHIELDS
NEW Chemical Mitt
Amazing Discovery! Autoists wild over new "NO-FOG" Windshield Cleaner. Simply glide over windshield chemically-treated Mitt—at once glass sparkles crystal clear. Blurry mist, frost, sleet, snow disappear like magic. Stops fogging. Sells like wild!
SAMPLES FOR AGENTS Sample offer sent immediately to all who send name at once. A penny postal will do. SEND NO MONEY—just your name.
KRISTEE CO., 1445 Bar Street, AKRON, OHIO

Get Well QUICKER
From Your Cough Due to a Cold
FOLEY'S Honey & Tar Cough Compound

MAKE EXTRA MONEY
SELL
Build Steady Repeat Business
No Investment—No Experience.
UNION LABEL BOOK MATCHES
direct from America's Largest Exclusive Union Label Book Match Manufacturers. We feature PETTY Glamour Girls, Scenics, handsome Dog series and NEW AD-DISPLAY DOUBLE BOOK MATCHES. Make BIG PROFIT QUICK. Write Today for SPECIAL OFFER and FREE POWERHOUSE selling kit.
SUPERIOR UNION LABEL BOOK MATCHES
SUPERIOR MATCH CO.
Dept. S-10, 7528 S. Greenwood, Chicago

ly in wait until the wagons have been fully loaded with dry wood. Then, overpowering the detail in a sudden rush, cutting loose the animals and driving them off, they lash the men, guard, teamsters and all, to the wagon wheels or the top of the load before setting fire to it. This duty has become very unpopular."

BEEFS AND BOOSTS DEPT.—We get quite a bit of mail from readers, giving us their reaction to the magazine—some pro and some con. You might be interested in reading a couple of more or less typical communications presenting both schools of thought. For instance, here's what Mr. A. N. Ray of Amado, Arizona, has to say about the recent issues of *Adventure*—and no punches pulled either!

To the Editor: Having been a reader of *Adventure* since the days of Pendexter, Tuttle, Gordon Young, Knibbs, etc., it is with no little regret that I now find it considerably on the corny side, in fact, well up with the leaders in that slap-happy parade. True, this has been no recent development but I keep buying it in the hopes somebody will pull it out of the bog. With the one exception of Buckley and his "Luigi Caradosso," I find it pretty pale business. Whether this is entirely due to a scarcity of real writers, downright indifference, or Progress, I wouldn't know. But I do know that, for the most part, your present-day crop of Western writers are a long way from camp, having either never lived here, or having never strayed very far from their hotel. Were it otherwise, 'twould be difficult to imagine how they have managed to do so badly. Or isn't knowing something of your subject a "must" any more?

Being a mere punk of the 90's (vintage of '94) it is conceivable my perspective is lacking the modern twist and, consequently, intelligence. But pending such developments as the injuries of time will produce (put to bed with a spade), is it too much to suggest that the present crop of entertainers *live* a little something of what they are trying to say?

Of course if *Adventure* is now published exclusively for dudes, then please convey this letter to the wastebasket with my compliments and forget about it. If not, well, turn on your wolf—if you have one. I've been shot at before. Until then—*Hasta luego.*

Well, just when we're on the point of creeping off somewhere and committing *hara-kiri,* the mail brings in a letter like this one received recently from Mr. Joseph Basum of Gleason Avenue, New York—

To the Editor: Congratulations, from an "old reader" on marked improvement in *Adventure* recently. Cheers to the man who brilliantly deduced that serials don't belong in a monthly magazine. Instead of keeping me in suspense for the next issue, they just wasted space. I award a fine booby prize to all the saboteurs who jammed the start of one lousy serial, back to back with the end of another blown up, long-winded space-waster all in one 130 page book.

The greater number of shorts and "trues" accommodated by eliminating serials and those notoriously padded, and filled in, long novelettes, has made *Adventure* far more readable. And even more pleasing is the fine quality of the stories in the recent issues. Not worthy of your magazine are those ten cent comic types one finds in some other publications, whose authors explain in the opening page that our hero is the most redoubtable and wittiest he-man. And follow by having our hero "daringly and single-handedly invade the enemy's lair, in the presence of large numbers of cowardly though villainous henchmen." There slapping down the chief and a half dozen armed retainers, with his bare hands, he nonchalantly makes an impossible getaway, and regrettably lives to be presented reverently in future issues as a colossal treat to the palpitating readers.

Starting with Vol. 1, Number 1, I have stuck with *Adventure* with considerable interest through the years.

And I had grown accustomed to a half good and half poor book for so long that I never expected such improvement as I've seen lately. I hope you keep up the good work.

The lesson apparently is the old one that you can't please everybody. . . . And we are fully aware that in trying to put out a magazine that is consistently entertaining to men—that retains the authentic flavor and character that we feel have always distinguished *Adventure*—and in seeking new writers to take the places of those oldtimers Mr. Ray speaks of (and we agree with him—they were terrific!) we cannot always achieve our goal. We can only do our darndest. And incidentally, those two letters printed above were *equally* welcome, believe it or not. An editor certainly learns more from brickbats than bouquets—but, being human, an occasional pat on the back is mighty nice too.—K. W. G.

HAVE YOU GOT THE GUTS TO REALLY KNOW YOURSELF?

Do You Feel Lonely?
Do You Feel Inferior?
Do You Hate Your Job?
Do You Worry Too Much?
Do You Have Strange Desires?
Do You Fail With the Opposite Sex?

Self-Knowledge is the Key to Success!

Look at the people you respect and admire. They've got what it takes and they know they've got it. They are selling their best points. Do you know yours?

HERE IS YOUR GREAT OPPORTUNITY!

The National Institute of Psycho-Identification has developed, for research purposes, a testing series you can take in the privacy of your own room. These tests are the work of a prominent psychologist, developed after years of study. Take these tests and get **professional** information and analysis of your Personality Traits, General Capabilities and Occupational Interests.

Employers spend thousands to get this information about executives. **The Army tested millions.** Statistics from these tests will be used for research! Help this study and yourself.

TO: National Institute of Psycho-Identification, Inc. Suite 200, The Engineering Bldg., 205 W. Wacker Drive, Chicago 6, Illinois

Please send me **IN A PLAIN ENVELOPE** the Institute self-testing series. I enclose $3.00 with the understanding that after I submit the completed tests the institute will prepare, without further charge an individual analysis of my General Capabilities, Behavior Traits and Occupational Interests and will submit to me a professional and confidential report.

Name.....

Street.....

City..... State.....

Wear Sample Suit NOT 1¢ TO PAY!

Here's an amazing plan! Write me today and I'll show you how to get a fine, all-wool made-to-measure suit for yourself—to wear and show to friends. Just take a few orders, that's all! Here's an easy way to get your own suit without paying 1c, and also make fine cash profit on every order you take. You send no money, now or ever. Just rush name and address for Sample Woolens and Valuable Sample Suit Coupon. Act now.

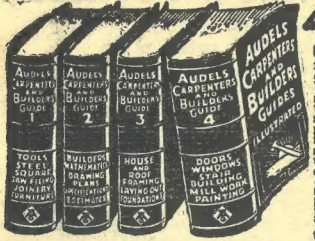
W. Z. GIBSON, 500 S. Throop Street Dept. A-498, Chicago 7, Illinois

FREE MONEY MAKING OUTFITS!

Man or woman—young or old. YOU can earn steady income in full or spare time. Simply write orders for Kendex nylon hosiery sold with amazing GUARANTEE that gives free replacement if hose runs or snags (regardless of cause) within period to 3 months. Complete line including sheerest 60 gauge. Good Housekeeping Guarantee Seal. Nationally advertised. Also beautiful lingerie and wonderful robes at lowest direct-to-wearer prices. Complete line men's hose guaranteed one full year or replaced free! No money or experience needed. We deliver and collect. Advance cash plus huge bonus. Postcard will bring you free sample stocking and money-making sales outfit prepaid. No obligation. Nothing to pay.

Kendex Company, Babylon 69, N. Y.

AUDELS Carpenters and Builders Guides 4 vols. $6



Inside Trade Information for Carpenters, Builders, Joiners, Building Mechanics and all Woodworkers. These Guides give you the short-cut instructions that you want—including new methods, ideas, solutions, plans, systems and money saving suggestions. An easy progressive course for the apprentice and student. A practical daily helper and Quick Reference for the master worker. Carpenters everywhere are using these Guides as a Helping Hand to Easier Work, Better Work and Better Pay. To get this assistance for yourself, simply fill in and mail FREE COUPON below.

Inside Trade Information On:

How to use the steel square—How to file and set saws—How to build furniture—How to use a mitre box—How to use the chalk line—How to use rules and scales—How to make joints—Carpenters arithmetic—Solving mensuration problems—Estimating strength of timbers—How to set girders and sills—How to frame houses and roofs—How to estimate costs—How to build houses, barns, garages, bungalows, etc. —How to read and draw plans—Drawing up specifications—How to excavate—How to use settings 12, 13 and 17 on the steel square—How to build hoists and scaffolds—skylights—How to build stairs—How to put on interior trim—How to hang doors—How to lath—lay floors—How to paint.

Step up your own skill with the facts and figures of your trade. Audels Mechanics Guides contain Practical Inside Trade Information in a handy form, Fully illustrated and Easy to Understand. Highly Endorsed. Check the book you want for 7 DAYS FREE EXAMINATION. Send No Money, Nothing to pay Postman.

CUT HERE

MAIL ORDER

AUDEL, Publishers, 49 W. 23 St., NEW YORK 10, N. Y.

Please send me postpaid for FREE EXAMINATION books marked (x) below. If I decide to keep them I agree to mail $1 in 7 Days on each book or set ordered and further mail $1 monthly on each book or set until I have paid price, otherwise I will return them.

- ☐ CARPENTERS & Builders Guides (4 Book Set). $6
- ☐ MASONS & Builders Guides (4 Book Set) . . . 6
- ☐ PLUMBERS & Steamfitters Guides (4 Book Set). 6
- ☐ OIL BURNER GUIDE, 384 Pages 1
- ☐ HOUSE HEATING GUIDE, 1000 Pages 4
- ☐ PAINTERS & DECORATORS MANUAL, 450 Pgs. 2
- ☐ BLUE PRINT READING, 416 Pages 2
- ☐ REFRIGERATION & Air Conditioning, 1280 Pgs. 4
- ☐ SHEET METAL WORKERS Handy Book, 388 Pgs. 1
- ☐ SHEET METAL PATTERN LAYOUTS, 1100 Pgs. 4
- ☐ AIRCRAFT WORKER, 240 Pages 1
- ☐ GARDENERS & GROWERS Guides (4 Book Set). 6
- ☐ AUTO MECHANICS GUIDE 4
- ☐ DIESEL ENGINE MANUAL, 400 Pages 2
- ☐ WELDERS GUIDE, 400 Pages 1
- ☐ MACHINISTS Handy Book, 1600 Pages . . . 4
- ☐ MECHANICAL DRAWING GUIDE, 160 Pages. 1
- ☐ MECHANICAL DRAWING & DESIGN, 480 Pgs. 2
- ☐ MATHEMATICS & CALCULATIONS, 700 Pgs.. 2
- ☐ MECHANICAL Dictionary, 968 Pages 4
- ☐ MILLWRIGHTS & Mechanics Guide, 1200 Pgs. 4
- ☐ POWER PLANT ENGINEERS Guide, 1500 Pages. 4
- ☐ ENGINEERS & FIREMANS EXAMS, 528 Pages. 1
- ☐ PUMPS, Hydraulics & Air Compressors, 1658 Pgs. 4
- ☐ MARINE ENGINEERS Handy Book, 1280 Pages 4
- ☐ ENGINEERS & Mechanics Guides (8 Book Set). 12
- ☐ Answers on Practical ENGINEERING, 254 Pages 1
- ☐ ELECTRIC WIRING DIAGRAMS, 210 Pages . . 1
- ☐ ELECTRICIANS EXAMINATIONS, 250 Pages. 1
- ☐ ELECTRICAL DICTIONARY, 9000 Terms . . . 2
- ☐ ELECTRIC MOTOR GUIDE, 1000 Pages 4
- ☐ HANDY BOOK OF ELECTRICITY, 1440 Pages 4
- ☐ ELECTRICAL POWER CALCULATIONS, 425 Pgs. 2
- ☐ RADIOMANS GUIDE, 975 Pages 4
- ☐ ELECTRONIC DEVICES, 216 Pages 2
- ☐ ELECTRIC LIBRARY, 7000 Pages (12 Book Set). 18 Vols. I, II, III, IV, V, VI, VII, VIII, IX, X, XI, XII $1.50 Ea.

Check NOW!

You Can Look Over Any Guide In Your Own Home

Start the Easy Payments If Satisfied

MAIL THIS TODAY

Name_____

Address_____

Occupation_____

Employed by_____ PFG

(Continued from page 71)

But how far wrong? He could not tell how far he had come in the nightmare of the jungle, screaming and rushing in an unplanned route. His legs, his throat rebelled at the prospect of the torture in a thirst-maddened journey down the beach for—three miles? Five? Ten?

He collapsed to the sand and sat hopelessly, trying to breathe without pain.

At first the little sail was like another whitecap, but it neared shore too fast and the torn and bloody little man on the beach made joyful noises in his throat when he recognized it for an outrigger canoe. Water. Help back to the *Jade*.

Energy from somewhere sent Jason Korvene tottering down the beach toward help. Laughing and babbling at his own luck, Korvene zig-zagged down the sands where once American soldiers crouched and ran into oblivion. He was glad he was an American; secure in the knowledge of his reception from any native in the island group.

The stocky native, one foot out of his canoe as he beached it, turned at the strange sound. In his amazement, he let the fish he had speared and strung on a palm frond drop unnoticed to the sands. Frozen, he watched the little man running frantically toward him.

In sheer relief Korvene was waving his shirt high, shouting his happiness to the world until it gurgled off in a surprised gasp when the humming fish-spear pierced his heart.

With slow dignity, the native turned and walked toward the jungle wall. With the wisdom of an elder, he decided it would be better not to disturb the tribe, or the white father, with the tale of this strange occurrence unheard of for many moons now—a little, yellowish man shouting insanely down a beach and bringing destruction under a white banner.

Fervently, the native hoped it did not mean the return of the terrible days.

And when the tide came in over Jason Korvene, the little man still held in one stiffening hand the money box. Licking little waves soaked the white silk shirt in his other hand—the white cloth with the blood-stained circle in the center, like a rising sun.

THE END

Let Me Set You Up For BIG PROFITS In '50!

RUN THE BEST "SHOE STORE BUSINESS" IN YOUR TOWN!

Free! SELLING OUTFIT!

You Don't Invest a Cent! . . . Everything Furnished *FREE!*

You have a profitable "shoe store business" right in your pocket! You have none of the expenses of rent, clerk hire, light, fixtures, etc., of the ordinary shoe store. You are independent—you have an opportunity to make BIG MONEY as long as you care to work, in a business for which there is never-ending demand, because EVERYONE WEARS SHOES. You'll get repeat business from satisfied customers, and even if you start in Spare time, you soon should have an ever-growing, profitable Full-time business that you own 100%.

OVER 150 FAST SELLING STYLES FOR MEN AND WOMEN

You can satisfy the needs and taste of almost every person in your territory—you sell footwear in the finest leathers, latest styles and with exclusive comfort features that cannot be found in retail stores. You offer men and women the best values on the market with a line of over 150 top quality dress, work and sport shoes. The huge demand for our line makes it possible for us to keep our prices down—even lower this year—despite rising leather costs! These savings through tremendous production are passed on, through you, to the folks in your territory.

Guaranteed by Good Housekeeping REPLACEMENT OR RETURN OF MONEY IF NOT AS ADVERTISED THEREIN

GOOD HOUSEKEEPING SEAL OPENS DOOR

Recognized by women all over the world as the symbol of quality merchandise, the Good Housekeeping Seal of Approval on Mason Velvet-eez shoes opens doors for you and clinches sales.

EXTRA PROFITS SELLING CLOTHING

In addition to the generous profit you make on every pair of shoes, you have an opportunity to ADD TO YOUR INCOME by selling top quality Leather Jackets, Wool Shirts, Raincoats for men and women.

EXCLUSIVE FEATURES

Velvet-eez **AIR CUSHION** CLINCHES SALES FOR YOU!

When you sell this line, you sell FEATURES—features that no other shoe man can offer the folks in your territory—like this wonderful EXCLUSIVE Velvet-Eez AIR CUSHION that brings day-long comfort to men and women who are on their feet on hard floors and pavements from early morning to late night. The Velvet-Eez Demonstrator you'll get free in your Sales Outfit will clinch sales for you as it has for hundreds of other Mason Shoe Men all over the country!

PUT A "SHOE STORE BUSINESS" RIGHT IN YOUR POCKET . . . YOU DON'T INVEST A CENT . . . MAKE BIGGER PROFITS . . . NO STORE OVERHEAD... EXCLUSIVE SALES FEATURES BUILD YOUR REPEAT BUSINESS

HUGE NATIONAL ADVERTISING PROGRAM BACKS YOU

● You get the benefit of big, powerful ads in scores of magazines like Saturday Evening Post, Good Housekeeping, etc. People know Mason—are eager to get the special Personal Fitting Service we advertise for your benefit. And remember, we pay for all this advertising—it doesn't cost you a cent.

LEO DE MATO, WHO AVERAGES SIX SALES PER DAY, SAYS:

"I have accumulated over 645 customers. The Mason line with commissions up to $3.00 a pair is really SWELL! Not only am I anxious to sell these excellent shoes because it gives me the means to a more comfortable living for my family, but also, I am my own boss with no restrictions or time to account for."

DON'T DELAY

RUSH THE COUPON NOW!

Mason Shoe Mfg. Co.
Dept. M-355, Chippewa Falls, Wis.

Set me up for BIG PROFITS in '50! Rush me FREE Selling Outfit featuring Water Buffalo, Zipper and Air Cushion Shoes, Leather Jackets, other fast-sellers. Show me how National Advertising makes more customers and profits for me. Send everything Free and Postpaid. (My own shoe size is .....)

Name .....

Address .....

Town ..... State .....

MASON SHOE MFG. CO.

Dept. M-355, Chippewa Falls, Wis.

Millions of bottles are bought by men who like that

clear clean taste

Taste is mighty tough to put into words. But take one look at the delighted gleam in Br'er Rabbit's eyes and you'll appreciate what we mean by "clear, clean taste". It's that clear, clean taste that has set millions of men calling for PM.

PM

BLENDED WHISKEY

National Distillers Products Corporation, New York, N. Y. Blended Whiskey. 86 Proof. 67½% Grain Neutral Spirits.

SCAN COURTSEY OF
EXCITER